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Essay  
ON  
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POPE BENEDICT XIV.

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AN ESSAY  
ON  
BEATIFICATION, CANONIZATION,  
AND  
THE PROCESSES  
OF THE  
CONGREGATION OF RITES.

BY THE  
REV. F. W. FABER.



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M. D. CCC. XLVIII.



TO  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE EARL & COUNTESS OF SHREWSBURY,  
THIS ESSAY,  
WRITTEN AT THEIR SUGGESTION AND REQUEST,  
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED  
WITH SENTIMENTS OF DEVOTION AND GRATITUDE  
FOR THEIR MORE THAN PARENTAL KINDNESS  
IN TIMES OF DIFFICULTY AND TRIAL,  
AND FOR THE CONTINUED AND CHEERING EXAMPLE  
OF THEIR MANY DOMESTIC VIRTUES,  
SO FEELINGLY TESTIFIED  
BY THE DAILY BENEDICTIONS OF THE POOR.

St. WILFRID'S,  
FEAST OF OUR BLESSED LADY'S EXPECTATION,  
M. D. CCC. XLVII.



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SED LADY'S EXPECTATION,  
II.



ON  
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THE favourable reception which this Series of the Lives of the Saints has met with, the extensive sale, especially among our Protestant fellow-countrymen, and, so far as we have seen, the uniformly kind favour and indulgent encouragement shown to it by the Catholic press, both of England and America, may perhaps warrant the Editors in venturing a few observations, which would have been premature and out of place before, but have now become due to the continued indulgence of our readers. There are many things which may appear to need some little apology ; not only the irregularity of the publication of the early volumes, but also the choice of Lives first put before the public, occasional instances of slovenly translation, ungainly expressions, apparently uncatholic from

a too literal adherence to the original, and here and there phrases which in the Catholic language of a Catholic country are easily intelligible, but which may at first sight appear wanting in controversial accuracy. These it is hoped have been already overlooked by our readers; the difficulty of managing so extensive an undertaking, the uncertain coming in of manuscript, and some other private disadvantages, often leave the Editors hardly their own masters; but all which are much less likely to be felt in the succeeding volumes. But there are matters of more importance than this: the very title of the Series and the provisions of the Prospectus naturally raise questions in the minds of many of our good Protestant readers, and perhaps of Catholic laymen as well, which deserve both an answer and a settlement, and upon which Protestants may be glad to have some little information, and be willing to take it not in spirit of controversy, but simply of information drawn from sources which do not generally fall in the line of their reading. It is of these, if we may do so without presumption, that we wish to say something at present; and the tone of generous admiration and ardent sympathy, with which many of the sons of modern Rome, such as St. Charles Borromeo, St. Francis Xavier, St. Francis of Sales, St. Vincent of Paul, and others, are almost invariably spoken of by English writers, warrant us in supposing that the information contained in the following pages will not be unacceptable to our readers. What is canonization? How

is it done? What does it import to a Catholic? How does it differ from beatification? What is meant by the title of Venerable, and by the Holy See decreeing that a man has practised virtue in an heroic degree? What is the amount of authority attaching to each of these acts of the Church, and in what sense are they acts of the Church? What sort of obligation, if any, do they lay Catholics under? What sort of value, considered simply as questions of evidence, have they to others? And what sanction, if any, do the biographies of the saints borrow from the fact, that the Church has made their cultus matter of precept or permission? And what sort of authority do the peculiar formation and jealous scrutiny of the processes give them, simply as human testimony judicially sifted? Something like an answer to these questions will be attempted in the following pages.

There is hardly any study, and certainly no kind of spiritual reading, which calls for more cautious jealousy and scholar-like discretion than the Lives of the Saints; and if it be actually impossible in any particular instance to avoid erring in one of two extremes, it is better to be too backward than too forward in the matter before us. When we pass the boundaries of ordinary life and enter a land of marvels and of strange actions, we must remember that we are on the very ground where delusion and counterfeit work is to be looked for, and we must be careful not to let either general enthusiasm or a particular devotion to a favourite saint, or a

natural tendency to give in to the spirit and genius of romance, allure us for one instant from the analogy of the faith. It is a comparatively trifling mistake to deal out too scanty an allowance of belief to the miraculous gifts with which Almighty God may have favoured one of His chosen servants and vessels of election ; but to be beguiled into false devotions or immoderate feelings, to confound the possible with the probable, the probable with the certain, and even the certain with what is matter of faith, is a far more serious affair, essentially injurious to our best spiritual interests, and yet which very easily comes of confounding the admirable with the imitable in the Lives of the Saints. Indiscreet corporal penances, peculiar observances of interior mortification breeding scruples because unsuited to us, a morbid hankering after raptures, ecstasies, and other supernatural gifts, a conceited fancy (perhaps one of the most perilous of delusions) that we are being raised to the higher degrees of mental prayer, affected singularities in good works, disregard and disesteem of our director, as though he misunderstood what God is doing in our souls—these are some of the errors into which an undiscerning study of the Lives of the Saints has led and may lead ; and the simple enumeration of them is a sufficient condemnation. What has happened in Catholic countries may occur, though it be less likely, even were the cold atmosphere of circumambient heresy does so much to chill any thing like devotional excess.

But as corruptio optimi est pessima, so the very number and danger of the errors into which hagiology may lead, will give us some idea of the value of it as a means of spiritual advancement, and of the consequent dread of it felt by the spirits of evil. That which cannot be abused is good for nothing, said the acute Niebuhr of his own bold canons for interpreting the legends of primitive history ; and it would argue a great want of moderation as well as of discriminating judgment, to set aside the study of Saints' Lives altogether, because of the dangers into which an ill-guided and incautious imitation might lead. An intolerant impatience in trying to dispense with what lays us under the troublesome obligations of calmness, prudence, and discretion is generally a symptom of rash judgment, of prejudice greatly to be distrusted, and of an irritable impetuosity which would be very unbecoming in one who should put forward his opinion for others to follow, or who should venture to wield the weapons of spiritual direction. We should beware as much of this unsafe precipitation as of a blind unintelligent credulity, or an imperious desire to force others to believe and like as much as we may happen to believe and like ourselves.

All the Saints and spiritual writers have agreed in no one point so signally as in recommending the perusal of Saints' biographies. The Lives of the Saints, "the Gospel in practice" as he called them, were the constant study of the Blessed Liguori during the period of his

conversion, at the time when he left the bar and vowed to be an Oratorian. To the Lives of the Saints read upon his sick bed by the wounded Ignatius, the Church owes through the mercy of God the conversion of that wonderful man, and the incalculable fruits of his conversion in the labours of his glorious and persecuted society. The story which St. Augustine tells us in his Confessions of the two courtiers of Theodosius, converted all at once by the marvellous Life of St. Anthony, is too well known to be repeated here; and we read\* of the Blessed John Colombino, that he led a worldly, covetous, and irreligious life, but that one day, as his quaint old chronicler describes it, he went home from the warehouse more hungry than usual; and because his dinner was a little delayed, he got out of temper and abused both his wife and servant, saying he was in a hurry to go back to his counting-house. "You have too much money, and spend too little, John," said his wife; "why are you putting yourself out in this way? While I am getting things ready, take this book and read a little;" so saying, she gave him a volume containing some Lives of Saints. Giovanni, somewhat nettled, took the book and threw it into the middle of the room, saying, "You think of nothing but legends; I have the warehouse to go to." Presently however his conscience began to prick him; he took the book from the ground, and opening it, lighted upon the Life of

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\* Vita per Feo Belcari. c. ii.

St. Mary of Egypt. Shortly afterwards his wife called him to dinner: "Wait awhile," replied Giovanni, forgetting his hunger; and on he went. The legend was long, but, as his old biographer observes, there was a celestial melody in it: time sped; his wife looked at him; Giovanni was still reading, and what was more, grace was working. There was conversion in the legend of the penitent of Egypt; the story softened his heart; it was his thought by day, and his dream by night; the churlish Giovanni began to give alms, and always just double of what was asked of him; and to that reading was owing the outburst of the love of God which the Blessed Giovanni spread with his "poor sheep of Jesus," the Gesuati, from one end of Italy to the other, from the Pope at Viterbo down to the swineherd of Sienna.

It would be endless to multiply instances where grace has worked through the study of the Lives of Saints. Probably there are few of our readers who have not experienced it themselves. Let us content ourselves by casting a glance at the last day of the Blessed St. Philip Neri's Life, for he, if any one, can give us safe instruction in the matter. On the morning of Corpus Christi, the day on which God so suddenly took him to his reward, when the holy father had heard the confession of his favourite Francesco della Molara, he said to him, "Francesco, remember that for the future you always come to the Oratory to hear the sermons, and do not forget to read spiritual books, *especially the*

*Lives of the Saints.*" Aware of his approaching end, he gave his penitents that morning spiritual instructions, with an unusual tenderness mingled with solemnity ; and he was particularly urgent about three things, the frequentation of the Sacraments, the attending sermons, and the reading Lives of the Saints. After he had said vespers and compline, he spent the afternoon partly in receiving visits, and partly in hearing the Lives of Saints read to him, and he had the Life of San Bernardino of Sienna, that eloquent lover of Mary, read to him twice over. Such were the practice and council of a Saint just as he himself was about to enter into glory.

Indeed, to discard ourselves or discourage in others the reading the Lives of Saints, would apparently betoken some disrespect to the Church ; for by even the lowest of her sanctions, such as the steps preparatory to the *signatura commissione*, she at least calls the attention of her children to the holy men upon whose lives apostolical processes have been or are about to be formed, or who by the custom of the Congregation of Rites are entitled to the name of Venerable ; and by the decree of canonization the cultus of the Saint *permitted* in beatification, is made *of precept* to the Universal Church. These clearly are the models she puts before us to admire and imitate ; these alone of our fellow exiles in this vale of tears, does she authoritatively pronounce to be now enjoying the Beatific Vision ; these are the marked followers of the Lamb, whom the Church calls by name that we may know them

and copy their virtues as well as venerate their relics; and it is worth observing, that hardly ever are mass and office granted to the nameless martyrs or "sancti baptizati," whose bodies are extracted from the catacombs, so strongly does the idea of imitation come out in all that regards the cultus of the Saints. The practice and advices of the Saints themselves, recorded facts, the finger of the Church, the universal teaching of spiritual writers, all unite in pointing out the study of Saints' Lives as a great means of grace and an almost necessary help to advancement in virtue.

We must not however forget the distinction between what is admirable and what is imitable in these records of sanctity; for to lose sight of this distinction would be most dangerous. "Read the Histories and Lives of the Saints," says St. Francis of Sales in his Introduction to a Devout Life\*, "in which, as in a looking-glass, you may behold the portraiture of a Christian life, and accommodate their actions to your state of life; for, although several actions of the saints cannot absolutely be imitated by such as live in the midst of the world, yet they may be in some degree followed: for example, you may imitate the solitude of St. Paul, the first hermit, in your spiritual and real retirements; and the extreme poverty of St. Francis by the practices of poverty; and so of the rest. It is true, there are some of their Histories that give

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\* Pt. II. xvii. 3, 4.

more light for the conduct of our lives than others, such as the Life of the Blessed Mother Theresa, the Lives of the first Jesuits, that of St. Charles Borromeo, St. Louis, St. Bernard, the Chronicles of St. Francis and several others. There are others again which contain more matter of admiration than imitation; as the Life of St. Mary of Egypt, of St. Simeon Styliates, and the two St. Catherines of Sienna and Genoa, of St. Angela, and such like; *which nevertheless fail not in general to give us a great relish for the love of God.*" This is a very remarkable passage to come from such a writer as St. Francis, and illustrates very well the practical turn of his mind. He would have even the extraordinary actions of the saints, such as the utter solitude of Paul, and the utter poverty of Francis, copied by us in our measure and by accommodation; and few perhaps less versed in spiritual direction, would have mentioned the Chronicles of St. Francis as among the imitable biographies. Indeed the extreme difficulty of drawing the line between the lives imitable and lives admirable is very significant. Father Quadrupani, the Barnabite, good-humouredly laughing at ambitious beginners who envy St. Joseph of Cupertino his marvellous flights in the air, lays great stress on the same distinction, and gives the same advice in his beautiful Documents for tranquillising the scrupulous;\* yet even the Life of St. Mary of Egypt, ranked by

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\* xiii. Lettura Spirituale. 3.

St. Francis among the admirable rather than the imitable lives, was the *frequent* study of the wise and practical St. Philip Neri, and as we have just seen, was the means of the Blessed Colombino's conversion from the niggard worldliness of a hard-hearted tradesman.

We must therefore, while giving scope to a right and proper caution and criticism, repress with equal jealousy imprudent fears, uncritical censures, and cold suspicions. We must take the middle road of kindly and intelligent moderation, and endeavour to ascertain for ourselves safe canons by the aid of which we shall be enabled to maintain this middle ground against both coldness and credulity. We all know too well the numbing effect which the pestilential air of heresy is likely to have upon us; no one who has resided for a while in a Catholic country, but feels and fears the danger when he returns home. It is therefore quite possible that we may become in some little measure tainted by the spirit of unbelief which is around us; we may look at things rather too much as our neighbours look at them, and without being aware of it ourselves. Without our faith being touched, our tone of mind and spirit of devotion *may* be somewhat injured by being lowered; and our best security against this is a humble acknowledgement of its possibility. The danger is indeed becoming every day less and less, because of the abatement of prejudice which there is on every side, and because of the much more patient and kindly spirit which the religious ear.

nestness of those who differ from us causes them to exhibit towards us, our doctrines, and our rites. Where there is so much less readiness to suspect evil and so much more willingness to grant a fair and reasonable hearing, we are under less temptation to withhold a more simple, natural, full, and genuine expression of our sentiments, unchecked by a continual dread of ill-natured misinterpretation. Still it may be well for us to see what this temper might come to, if indulged; the picture is happily an imaginary one, for the gift of faith and the grace of the Sacraments stay the plague at every turn. Nevertheless it may be profitable to see what principles, which an unwary son of the church might give a lodging to in his mind, would soon produce if they could obtain an unhindered developement for themselves. If we get a clear idea of this, it will throw no little light upon the questions which remain for our future consideration.

It must of course be an object of the utmost importance to every loving son of the Church, to have, not his understanding only, but his feelings, taste, and devotional yearnings in harmony with the genius and temper of his spiritual Mother. Indeed, without this it seems impossible for a man to achieve anything great for his neighbour, or to advance himself in the path of Christian perfection. Short of heresy, at more or less remote distances from it in different cases, we are all liable to a cold, dry, hard, doubting temper, which is always standing on

the defensive as though it was going to be robbed of some portion of its power of disbelieving, as though more were about to be exacted from it in the way of credulity than is absolutely necessary for salvation. This temper is most injurious to true piety, and most dangerous to the soul, as may be readily perceived if men will only reflect how very far removed it is from the disposition of a child, the model which our Redeemer puts before us in the Gospel. But persons of this turn of mind, if they gave in to it, would never be content with keeping their own little treasure of faith safely under lock and key; they would become strongly impressed with the idea, that they have a mission to prevent others from believing one atom more than they believe themselves; the whole world in their view would be running headlong into superstition, and they called on by a duty wholly self-imposed to arrest this universal deluge of credulity. It would actually fret them to see any one else believing, and visibly enjoying the belief, of what is not positively and penally defined. Outside the Church this temper is Protestantism, graduating down almost to naked unbelief; inside the Church it would be the same disease stripped of its fatal power, like smallpox by the charm of vaccination. The grace of the Sacraments and Communion with the body of Christ divest it of its malignant efficacy, and leave it simply as a weakening and disastrous affliction of the soul. The spiritual danger of thus "making a shrew of the Church,"

as the Anglican Laud somewhat quaintly words it, was most clearly perceived by the holy patriarch Ignatius, and led him to append to his Book of Spiritual Exercises those eighteen rules, *Ad sentiendum cum ecclesia*, whereby a man might keep himself in an *orthodox humour*, so to speak, as well as in the orthodox faith. There is perhaps no part of that marvellous little book in which the Saint's supernatural gift of discernment is more visible than in those eighteen pithy rules; and this may be seen from the fact, that no imitation of Catholic doctrine and ritual outside the Church, although it might be put in apparent harmony with formal statements of doctrine, could be tortured into such a shape as would fit these rules, and this has been known to have been in one instance a source of uneasiness leading ultimately to conversion.

Now it is clear that there are in the Catholic Church, independent of the dogmas which are actually *de fide*, and which a man must receive or become formally heretical, a great number of important doctrines which are so true, that it is a moot point among Catholic doctors whether they are not *de fide*, a number which are *proximæ fidei*, a number which are certain because *de fide ecclesiastica*, as it is called, many which are commonly received, many which find place in the offices of the Church, many which are "pious," many which the greater number of Saints held, many to which, expressed in certain devotions, the Church accords liberal indulgences, many which are symbolized in certain

ritual acts authorized by the Church, many which form the groundwork of approved customs in religious orders, many the denial of which has been stigmatized by universities and theologians, as scandalous and temerarious, and savouring of heresy. Now how could a man be considered in harmony with the Church, supposing he rejected all or many of these things? Must he not be forfeiting no little portion of religious truth? Must he not be allowing no little of the spirit of the Church to escape him? Must he not be guilty of as monstrous an act of private judgment as a man can commit short of actual overleaping the limits of formal heresy? We hear of holy men who by throwing themselves heart and soul, like children, into the system of the Church, acquired such an instinct for true doctrine, that they could reject subtle errors when propounded to them, even though they had no knowledge of dogmatic theology. But it is indeed most true that there may be implicit false doctrine as well as explicit heresy, or, in other words, that there may be material heresy, which the goodness of God prevents from becoming formal; and this slow-heartedness to believe, while it arrays a false and illegitimate discretion against all that is generous and ennobling in the temper of faith, may run into material heresy much sooner than people are aware. Men have a great itching to obtain the reputation of being safe, and to be slow always looks like being safe, and as the eye of the multitude does not go deeper than

the look, this character is very cheaply acquired. Few have any intelligible and internally recognized principles by which they moderate the judgments of their understanding; in most cases they merely aim at a point which seems tolerably equidistant from two extremes, as if truth resided in a fixed and material mean; in this process possible and probable truths, possible and probable aids to devotion, possible and probable gifts of God may be sacrificed; but where the conscience does not take pains to pay an habitual homage to truth for its own sake, it is astonishing how blunt the perception of the value of these things becomes. Catholics who are in the habit of practising meditation, however loudly they may be accused of superstitious tendencies, are in reality not only quite as accurate as others, but even more accurate, in distinguishing between what is actually necessary to be believed and what is not; witness the continual bandying about of the words *heretic* and *heresy* among others, and the comparatively rare use of them among Catholics, as applied at least to differences of opinion one with another. Catholics take much pains to ascertain the exact degree of authority and probability attaching to each sacred doctrine or pious opinion, because all truth countenanced by the Church is to them a solemn thing, from God, and of unknown import to their souls. Charity also would fain be saved the pain of condemnation when and where she can. Thoughtful people must see that the Church's gift of infallibility affects in a certain

way and to a certain amount all the permitted or favoured doctrines which she allows or encourages her children to embrace; just as if St. Peter or St. Paul had given any uninspired counsels to their penitents, they would not be quite like the counsels of a common Saint, although they might not be inspired; and this holds without at all meaning to establish any parity between inspiration and infallibility. Men have their souls to save, and they are never in so sure a way as when they are in childlike agreement and harmony, not with the *de fide* definitions alone (although that is *the essential point*) but with the current doctrines, pious opinions, encouraged usages, indulged devotions, and significant ritual of Mother Church.

All this applies very strongly to the study of the Lives of the canonized Saints, and to the degree of influence which it is safe and well to let those lives have over our doctrinal opinions and ascetic practices. It is then of no little importance that we should know what amount of authority the decrees of canonization possess, and how far they have power to oblige the faith of Catholics; because otherwise we might run into errors on both sides. On the one hand we might tamper with the great prerogative of infallibility, and on the other confound truth with probability, and get superstition out of the admixture. For let us see how the case stands. Every one will admit that there is an immense body of direct or indirect teaching in these biographies, bearing in the way of illustration at

least, if not of proof, upon the commonly received doctrines in the schools of theology. A man need not have gone deeper than Bellarmine in his reading to perceive this. A whole corpus of doctrine and practice might be drawn up out of them; and as a matter of fact, great use is made of them as soon as ever men come to teach doctrine or ascetics in a practical way. Almost all the great works of catechetical instruction are adorned by examples drawn from the Lives of the Saints; and the same remark will apply to a considerable proportion of our most classical books of devotion. Some of this teaching consists in beautiful enforcements and exemplifications of truths already taught us by authority; some adds its weight to questions left open to dispute in the Catholic schools, and inclines the balance in this or that direction; some forms the actual foundation of "pious opinions" among the faithful, or aids in propagating new devotions, as St. Theresa gave at least quite a fresh stimulus to the devotion to St. Joseph,\* and the venerable Margaret Mary Alacoque, and F. Colombiere to that of the Sacred Heart;† even the miracles themselves are in many instances closely connected with doctrine. The truth of all

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\* The first public appearance of this devotion was in the Confraternity of Bachelors at Avignon: and it is said to have been first propagated by Gregory XI. in the fourteenth century, in the ancient church of St. Agricola at Avignon.

† Such at least is the common opinion; but in the life of F. Eudes, a posthumous work of the Jesuit de Montigny, the origin of this devotion is referred to F. Eudes. Liv. x. p. 366. note.

this may at once be shown by a few examples. St. Philip Neri, previous to the reformed discipline of the Council of Trent, miraculously discovers a youth to be in priest's orders by the shining of the sacerdotal *character* on his forehead. St. Catherine of Bologna assures us, and her words are quoted in almost countless treatises of devotion, that she gained whatever she wished through the intercession of the holy souls in purgatory; yet this appears *prima facie* opposed to the teaching of St. Thomas. The question of the safety and propriety of the peculiar devotions to the Sacred Humanity of Jesus, which are found such stumbling-blocks by those who are not Catholics, and have been so successfully propagated by the sons of St. Ignatius, is considered as set at rest in no slight degree by the authority of St. Theresa, and the supernatural lights she received on the subject. From the Life of St. Francis Jerome we gain a fearful knowledge of the intensity of the pains of purgatory; from that of St. Stanislas Kostka we are piously led to believe that the great feasts of the Church Militant are in some way noted in the Church Triumphant; and from that of the B. Henry Suso we obtain a most vivid idea of the refreshment of the adorable sacrifice of the Mass to the souls in purgatory. So from other Lives we learn the peculiar power which certain prayers appear to have in heaven; for example, the well-known instance of the Antiphon, *Sub tuum præsidium confugimus*, before the Litany of Loreto, and the words *Eja ergo advocata nostra* in the *Salve*

Regina, as was revealed to St. Gertrude; and from the Life of the venerable Benedict Joseph we learn, that a life of perpetual pilgrimage to holy shrines, may even in these self-wise days be, with proper vocation, acceptable to Almighty God.

Instances might be multiplied almost ad infinitum, but these will suffice. Now it is plain that all this cannot be disposed of in any brief or contemptuous way; the attention, the conscientious deliberative attention, of a Catholic must be arrested by it, and perhaps the more he lives in the practice of the presence of God, the more time he spends in the peaceful region of prayer, the less will he be inclined to handle these things in a summary and disrespectful way. Can he safely reject as false, or at least not worth a thought, everything which is not positively de fide? Certainly not: it would be the most unreasoning indiscretion, the most impatient intellectual rashness that could be conceived. It would be the case of a man whose prime care was, not to be in harmony with the Church, but just to turn the corner of formal heresy by an adroit and perilous nicety: it would be the case of a man, who through culpable idleness and still more culpable fretfulness of intellect, declined the toil and thought and humble submission to the authority of great and good men which the matter required and exacted, and having thus come to a decision by a faulty moral process, he would be found, as is usual, bigoted in his own opinion, and a loud and irritable

censor of those whose opposite conduct appeared to contradict his own.

What then would be the course which a wise and pious discretion would pursue? First of all a man would lay down the authoritative teaching of the Church as his sole *rule*, his only really divine one; and while he would not venture to assert that everything besides that was false, he would most unhesitatingly assert that everything which contradicted that was beyond all controversy false; and secondly, that whatever even *seemed* the least out of harmony with the *rule* was on no account to be received, until the apparent discrepancy was reconciled in some way or other; and thirdly, that in no subject-matter would he evince more slowness, more jealousy, more suspicion, than in the case of these apparent discrepancies with authorized teaching; and fourthly, that the more exclusively such matters rested on visions, revelations, prophecies, and the like, all the more cautious would he be in receiving them, because he would feel himself within the special province of spiritual delusions. These canons must surely recommend themselves to every one, not as very deep certainly, but as safe and orthodox, inasmuch as they lead us to measure everything by its greater or less analogy with the authoritative teaching of the Church, and admit of a prudent jealousy as ballast to anything like a precipitate judgment or as a spur to a lazy credulity. We have before us as a *fact* the existence of a very extensive and singularly influential department of Catholic litera-

ture, the Lives of the Saints, and we have questions rising out of it which must be dealt with. It is not then a difficulty created for the mere pleasure of removing it; we find it ready for us, and pressing upon us. Starting therefore with these canons, and desiring no greater residuum of matter to be believed than these shall leave us, let us try to state the case of this voluminous literature, and to obtain more minute and practical rules for our guidance in allowing ourselves to be influenced by the Lives of the Saints.

First for the statement of the case; for in this matter, as in most others, a clear statement brings us half way to a conclusion. In opening the Lives of holy men, 1. canonized, 2. beatified, 3. of whom the Church has pronounced that they practised virtue in an heroic degree, and 4. who are considered commonly among Catholics as having died in the odour of sanctity, and consequently as candidates, to use a low word, for the honours of canonization—in opening the Lives of these men there two things especially which strike us. First, the constant, and in some instances, as in that of St. Joseph of Cupertino, almost unconscious exercise of miraculous powers, the occurrence of raptures, visions, bodily transformations, power over demons, the intermingling of the visible and invisible worlds, the reading of the secrets of the heart, the gift of bilocation, as it is called, and the like: these seem to surround the servant of God like an atmosphere, so that we have at first some little difficulty in getting at his common character. He seems to be-

long to a different order from ourselves; we have by an effort to strip him of his miraculous powers and gifts *gratis data* in order to discern between the admirable and the imitable. These marvels are to some quite unedifying, nay, almost shock and startle them; in others, as in St. Francis of Sales already quoted, they breed a more intense love of God, a much livelier apprehension of the mysteries of the faith, a generous contempt of the world and its little politics, a holy indifference to calumny and wrong, and a more efficacious desire to nerve themselves up for penance and the hard practices of interior mortification and the stony ascents of Christian perfection. Whether the fault is in the marvels for *giving* people disedification, or people are in fault for *taking* disedification from them, anyhow there the marvels are; and we are now only dealing with facts as we find them.

The second thing we observe in the Lives of these servants of God is a most extensive class of actions, totally opposed to the *common* rules of human prudence, and even repugnant to the prejudices of flesh and blood, as savouring of childishness, or indiscretion, or a want of sobriety or moderation, or as simply capricious. We may take as example St. Francis Borgia, allowing his face to be spit upon all night; St. Peter Martyr letting himself be imprisoned and remain for three years under a scandalous charge of impurity, which he might have dispelled by a word; St. John of God feigning himself mad; St. Philip Neri playing the fool, as men would call

it, in front of Chiesa Nuova, or reading light books to give foreigners a low opinion of him; Saints Marina and Theodora disguising themselves as men, and afterwards allowing children to be fathered on them without discovering the imposture; Brother Juniper, the Franciscan, permitting himself to be taken to the gibbet as a murderer, and only delivered by a singular intervention of Providence. These are specimens of the kind of actions alluded to, and instances might be almost infinitely multiplied. Now it must be borne in mind that we are not apologizing for these actions, still less holding them up as imitable; the latter proceeding would be indiscreet, the former impertinent; we are only noting the fact, that they occur abundantly, and so far as we have seen, in *every* Life of the servants of God whose causes have come before the Congregation of Rites. It is simply to the undeniable and significant *fact* that we desire to call attention at present.

Furthermore it must be remembered, that these extraordinary actions, seemingly so opposed to the dictates of prudence, are by no means easily or lightly admitted by the Sacred Congregation in the causes of beatification and canonization. To refer them to a special instinct of the Holy Ghost is not a mere invention of idleness or a refuge of uncritical credulity. On the contrary, they are submitted to a most rigid examination; causes are often delayed because of them, and a discussion takes place on the practice of the cardinal virtue of prudence as

exhibited by the servant of God whose cause is under consideration. Thus, when Canon Zanotti, misled by the spurious acts of St. Proculus, the patron of Bologna, referred his alleged homicide of Marinus to a special instinct of the Holy Ghost, Benedict XIV.,\* in showing the spuriousness of the acts, speaks very strongly of the duty of trying every other method of explanation, before the known sanctity of a Saint induces us to refer any of his extraordinary actions to a special instinct of the Holy Ghost. In the same way the Roman Sophronia, who killed herself during the persecution of Maxentius, is not reckoned among the Saints, because, as Baillet says, the Church had no proof of this being an inspiration; so that, although in the sight of God, who knows the heart, she might be a martyr, she could not be so before the Church, who does not judge the secrets of hearts. St. Austin also tells us that Mensurius of Carthage would not count as martyrs those who imprudently and without special call were the cause of their own martyrdom. When the cause of the Blessed Sebastian of Apparizio came before the Congregation, the Promoter of the Faith objected to his having been twice married, and yet in both unions lived in continence, especially as no proof was offered of his wives having consented to this, as there was in the case of St. Bridget and

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\* De Canon, iii. 18. *martyris repugnantia*, 8, 9. As we follow Benedict XIV. throughout we shall not load the pages with references, but content ourselves with this general acknowledgement.

Ulfo for a time ; so that it seemed rather a reprehensible singularity and contrary to the sacrament of matrimony, than an instance of heroic purity. In consequence of this the cause was stopped, and the case referred to the three universities of Paris, Padua, and Salamanca. The decision was in favour of Sebastian ; the cause proceeded and he was beatified. In like manner the postulators in the cause of the Blessed Peter Forier had to contend with the Promoter of the Faith on behalf of his prudence in recommending continence to several married persons. On the other hand the martyrdom of St. Emmeram of Ratisbon, related by Baronius (ad ann. 702), offers a most striking example of the prudence which the Church requires in those for whom the honours of canonization are claimed. When he had been most cruelly mutilated he asked his priest Vitalis to bring him some cold water to refresh him ; the priest, a thoroughgoing rigorist, and as such as deficient in prudence as in affectionateness, answered, that he ought rather to desire death than refreshment ; but St. Emmeram rejoined that no one ought to hasten to death, but rather to wish it should be deferred, that our weakness may have more space wherein to do penance. In harmony with this, the Church always in the case of her martyrs institutes a most rigid inquiry into the preparation they made for martyrdom, whether they were baptised or went to confession and received the Communion if they could, and the like, as we see in the causes of

St. John Nepomuc, St. Fidelis of Sigmaringa, and the twenty-six martyrs of Japan, and any proof of venturous negligence in these respects would immediately stop the cause. If then the extraordinary actions of the Saints, and the conformity of even martyrs at the very time of martyrdom to the ordinary obligations of Catholics, are submitted to such a jealous and suspecting rigour, our confidence surely must be proportionably heightened when the servants of God have passed the sacred ordeal, and are placed on the altars of the church for the admiration and imitation of the faithful. For, let it be observed once for all, and borne in mind throughout, the judicious Benedict XIV., in giving reasons why baptized children, though martyrs, should not ordinarily be canonized, says, "beatifications and canonizations are not solemnized only that we may have authorized\* intercessors with God, but also that we may imitate the deeds of those so canonized, and no *ratio imitandi* can be drawn from the case of infants." In the same way Pius VI., when he beatified Andrea Ibernon, a Franciscan lay-brother, in 1791, says in his decree, "It is the duty of Christians to imitate what they venerate; we therefore think it our duty to hold out to you the Blessed Andrea Ibernon for your veneration, and entreat you to imitate his virtues,"† It is quite necessary to

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\* Authorized, i. e. to us and for our devotions, not as if the decision of the Church affected a *comprehensor* further than by increasing his accidental glory.

† Charles Butler in *vit ejusd.*

remember that imitation, not admiration, is the object of the Church in canonizing Saints; it is one great part of her office as regards the *morals* of the faithful. This must materially influence our view of the marvellous part of the Saints' Lives, inasmuch as it shows that at least these extraordinary and irregular actions would operate against their canonization rather than advance it.

Extraordinary however as this class of the Saints' actions must be considered, we shall find that even those very actions are not mere objects of admiration, but convey lessons and propose models to all who are aiming at advancement in the spiritual life. Let us open the most accredited books of devotion and spiritual direction, and see in what sort of way they are handled there; for their appearance in such quarters is very much connected with the whole question now under consideration. Take for example the noted Catechisme Spirituel of F. Surin; \* speaking of true wisdom he says, "Q. In what does true wisdom consist? A. In ruling our judgments according to the common sense of the Saints. Q. What do you understand by the common sense of the Saints? A. I understand what they commonly think of the maxims of the Gospel, and the ideas which they have of perfection. Q. What then are the sources of true wisdom? A. The Gospel, the writings of the Saints, their senti-

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\* Vol. 1. p. viii. c. 1.

ments and their conduct, when all of them or nearly all of them, agree in thinking in the same way of certain points of perfection: for example, of the practice of gentleness, of self-contempt, and of the virtues about which we have spoken in the chapter on the Evangelical Counsels. For, although the Saints differ very much from each other, looked at with reference to their outward conduct, they resemble each other strikingly in their ideas of virtue, and in their manner of practising it, so that it is evident they are all animated by one spirit. This assemblage of ideas, maxims, and practices, in which the Saints agree, form what we call true wisdom. It has two essential characteristics; the one is—to be opposed to human prudence to such a degree as to look to men's eyes like folly: and the second is—to be so deep and hidden, that even the majority of those who practise virtue do not *comprehend* it, although no one who lives according to the spirit of Christianity can be altogether ignorant of it. Q. Have you no example by which you can make us understand wherein this hidden wisdom consists? A. There are none more marked than those of St. Francis and St. Ignatius. They loved contempt to such a degree, that they wished to pass for fools, and to perform actions which might earn that title for them; and although they had the precaution to warn us not to follow instincts of this sort without great reasons involving the glory of God, it is nevertheless true that they regarded this practice as an excellent

degree of perfection, and that in this matter their opinion was conformable to that of the rest of the Saints. There are several other points in this wisdom which the greater part of mankind has no relish for: for example, taking affronts and insults quietly, without seeking reparation for them. Q. Besides the Gospel and the writings of the Saints, is there no other living rule on which we could form ourselves so as to acquire this wisdom? A. Among the persons with whom we live, the common opinion of those who pass in the minds of the public for perfect may serve as a law and sure rule in this matter. For it generally happens that those persons whom we consider truly mortified, disinterested, and wholly given up to piety, all think alike; and without knowing each other, agree perfectly in the judgments they pass on the practice of virtue. It is in fact because they are all breathing the same air of sanctity, and are interiorly instructed in the same school, which is that of Jesus Christ. These persons, who live according to the maxims of the Gospel, may be regarded as the depositaries and interpreters of the minds of the Saints, and we may apply to them what our Lord has said of himself, They who shall do the Will of My Father, shall know if this doctrine be of God. Let us then, who wish to acquire the true wisdom, consult the opinion of the persons of whom we have spoken. As to men of learning and talent, if their wisdom is not based upon the mortification and abnegation of the Gospel, they

may indeed serve well for a rule in matters of faith and theology; but it would not be always safe to follow their opinion in the practice of this hidden wisdom which Jesus Christ has taught, and which the Saints alone have relished. In fact, we see that scholars are so little agreed among themselves (upon questions of this sort) and pass such conflicting judgments on matters of spirituality, that no great account is to be made of what they say of it."

These two things then, this constant dealing with the supernatural, and this multitude of actions seemingly repugnant to human prudence and social conventions, are just the distinguishing characteristics of these servants of God, marked out for the honours of ecclesiastical cultus. We boldly appeal to those who have any acquaintance with the voluminous literature of modern hagiology, if these two classes do not contain within themselves almost every discernible difference between ordinarily pious Catholics, and those whom the Church puts upon the altars for the veneration of the faithful. Theologically speaking, the logical differentia of a saint is the *heroicity* of his virtues:<sup>\*</sup> but then when we come to see what this heroicity is and wherein it consists, we find that the special

\* This must not be understood to mean that heroic virtue is specifically different from non-heroic virtue; this would be contrary to the consentient doctrine of St. Thomas, Scotus, and Suarez. The view taken in the text, in order to obtain an intelligible classification which would separate saints from ordinarily pious Catholics, is of course not to be confounded with the philosophical question of the *specific difference* of heroic virtue.

exhibitions of it are in these extraordinary actions, and the special seals of it the miracles wrought through the saints themselves or through their relics. The commonly received scholastic definition of heroicity implies as much as this; *virtus heroica est ille virtutis gradus, perfectio, seu fulgor, et excellentia, quæ facit, ut homo circa materiam illius virtutis, supra communem aliorum hominum operandi modum operetur, et in hoc Deo similis sit.*\* It is therefore no exaggeration (however it may seem so) to say that in order to get the *species* "Saint" out of the *genus* "good Catholic," the differentia must consist of the combination of the two things here mentioned. Add these things to a "good Catholic," and he becomes the similitude of one of those whom the Church holds up for our cultus; remove these things, and he sinks again to the level of an ordinarily pious Catholic; for the heroicity of his virtues is, we repeat, found either in the seal God has set to his practice of them, and this is by the gift of miracles, or in these apparently strange actions, which are then to be regarded as the fruits of a special instinct of the Holy Ghost. Apply this rule, for instance, to the Lives of many of those noble French ecclesiastics who were contemporaries of St. Vincent of Paul, and founders of those numerous missionary Congregations which so wonderfully revived the ancient Ambrosian spirit of the clergy. Some of them, however holy,

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\* Card. Lauria l. 3. sent. tom. 2. disp. 32. n. 27. ap. Scaramell.

have quite a different aspect from those whom the Church inscribes in the catalogue of the saints, while others, such as M. Olier, the founder of St. Sulpice, seem only to require the judicial solemnities to make them of the fraternity of the canonized. Any one versed in the biographies of the saints will at once admit the truth of this; they know almost beforehand the kind of actions which they will perform; their mind is constantly suggesting parallels from the Lives of other saints; the perfect similitude and consistency of the whole is quite familiar to them, so that they know "the kind of thing," to use a forcible vulgarism, to look for when they open the book. In a word, to repeat what was said before, the marvellous and the eccentric, as the foolish wisdom of the world would call them, form the logical *differentia* by which we acquire the species "Saint;" and this, independent of the conclusions which may be drawn from it, is extremely striking, and merits a serious and prolonged consideration.

But there is also another point which should not be forgotten, and which seems to render the isolation of the saintly character more complete and impressive. For if the *differentia* of the Saints is to be found in the combination of the marvellous and the eccentric, suffering, and of all sufferings especially the persecution and opposition of good men, seems to be an *inseparable accident* of sanctity, so soon as and so far as it is heroic. It was necessary that Christ should suffer and so enter into His glory, is in

its measure applicable to His saints. Hence an inquiry into this very thing forms part of the work of the Congregation of Rites. Not only are the sicknesses of the servant of God and the ordinary afflictions of his life inquired into, and the manner in which he bore them, but the falling away of his friends, the ridicule of the world, and the opposition of even good men, are investigated with special care, and that too while the dubium about his virtues is under consideration, as though these afflictions and thwartings were, so to speak, authentications which Providence is sure to give to heroic virtue, and of even a more convincing nature than miracles, seeing that the investigation of these cannot be entered upon until the dubium on the virtues has been solved and set at rest. Yet it is plain that these things add greatly to the likelihood of the Saint's character being misunderstood, or giving offence at first sight; they impart a look of strangeness to his life; they naturally make us suspect singularity, or self-will, or at least a want of discretion in not keeping in favour with virtuous persons and authorities. Many an objection of this sort which is made by readers, is nothing more than a repetition, although unconscious, of the shrewd shifts of the promoter of the faith, which he has urged out of a sense of duty, and which the postulators have answered and refuted to the satisfaction of the acuteness and jealousy of the Sacred Congregation. A very limited acquaintance with Acts of Canonization will enable a man to

see how true this is, and how seldom we can hear now from critics in the world even a tolerably plausible objection to the actions of a Saint, which has not been already far better urged and very completely answered in the Congregation.

We read in the Lives of the Saints of plans and actions which offend many even pious readers ; they disapprove of them in themselves, they disapprove still more of their being held up either to the admiration or imitation of the faithful. Now if when the Saints themselves were alive, redolent with the odour of their sanctity, the vividness of their bright example and the solemn authentication of their frequent miracles fresh upon them and around them—if at that time there was almost a general disapprobation of their plans and modes of action, as in the case of St. Alphonso Liguori, when he founded his Congregation, if, as again St. Alphonso was, they were left persisting in a kind of proud-looking isolation, if even popes and bishops were against them, and they gave way only to the pressure of actual command, if the pious were scandalized, and the holy Inquisition interfered, if calumny seemed for the while truth, and truth hypocrisy, if these wonderful men also went so far as to consider this opposition and offence the best proof they could have that their work was the Will of God, as St. Philip Neri and our good bishop Challoner are said often to have refused to join in a work because it was not opposed by good kind of men, if all this took place

where they were personally concerned, must not something of the same sort be always expected towards their Lives, especially if those Lives be faithful and minute? And will not this easily account for the diversity of opinion and the somewhat offended temper of objection which Saints' Lives have generally elicited? What the unkindly world, and the remaining worldliness in the ordinary faithful, found so uncongenial in the living Saints, will still be uncongenial in their Lives; although of course, in the case of Catholics, the intervention of the Church and the honours she has decreed to the Saint, will soften and diminish this, and will naturally make criticism less positive and more modest.

Yet after all the fact remains: these are just the cases in which there *has been* this intervention of the Church; it is exactly these men and men like them whom the Church has singled out with her unerring instinct for canonization; men who have had to confront this opposition, jealousy, thwarting, and suspicion of the good, and who have passed through the terrific ordeal of this heart-breaking persecution; and this fact, without pushing it even as far as we might, will be found most difficult of explanation on any hypothesis of adversaries, and yet most imperiously requires one at their hands.

Let us now take some instances, in order that we may not lie open to a charge of exaggeration. In the second report of the Auditors of the Rota, in the cause of St. Theresa, we read that she was so completely abandoned by every

one, that nobody would even hear her confessions. The auditors tell us of St. John of God and St. Jerome Emiliani, that they were counted and treated as mad; Surius tells us almost the same of St. Louis King of France. As to persecutions from heathen and heretics, we know what St. Francis Xavier suffered in India, St. James de la Marche from the Fraticelli, St. Pascal Baylon from the Huguenots, and St. Didacus in the Canaries; and for examples of persecution from bad Catholics, we have the priest Florentinus trying to poison St. Benedict, as St. Gregory tells us, the spite of Frate Elia against St. Francis and St. Anthony of Padua, the sufferings of St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Theresa, St. Charles Borromeo, and particularly the cruel persecutions which St. John of the Cross underwent in his great enterprise of reforming the Carmelite Order: to say nothing of the martyrdoms of St. John Nepomuc, and our own St. Thomas. But it is more to our purpose to adduce instances of the Saints being persecuted by good men, whom God, for their own humiliation and the merit of His servant, allowed to mistake the Saint, or to be deceived by calumny. St. Philip Neri was persecuted by Roman prelates under Paul IV. and St. Pius V.; his pilgrimages to the Seven Churches were put down to vain-glory or a seditious humour, and he was disgraced. St. Alphonso Liguori, after having been persecuted by Father Ripa and made the laughing-stock of Naples, was no sooner deserted by his first companions, Mandarini and others,

at Scala, than he was denounced by name from the pulpits of the capital as a warning to other self-sufficient dreamers. St. Theresa was denounced to the Inquisition, and so was St. Ignatius. The venerable abbot Berrer was deposed by a delegate of the Holy See, and bore his unjust punishment with the utmost patience for seven years. The glorious St. Joseph Calasancius, whose Life is such a study for these times, was summoned before the Inquisition; he was deprived of his office of general; his order was abolished and reduced to a simple Congregation, and was not restored until after his death by Clement IX. All this was in Rome itself, and under the eyes of Sovereign Pontiffs, whose officials, without any fault of their own or any want of justice, were deceived by a malicious conspiracy; and we are actually told that so frequent and grievous were the persecutions which St. Joseph Calasancius underwent from good men and prelates in authority, that the postulators were more than once on the point of giving the cause up in despair, such tedious difficulty had they to make their ground good against the promoter of the faith. In like manner Leo IX. was imposed upon and set against St. Peter Damian; and St. Gregory tells us that the Holy See gave ear to the calumniators of St. Equitius, who accused him of preaching without authority. Nay, even the absence of this kind of persecution seems to have amounted almost to an objection in the case of St. Francesca Romana; it was hinted that

she was entering into her glory without this suffering ; though, as every one knows, it pleased God to allow her to be subjected to frightful assaults of the evil one, which the auditors actually put in the place of other persecutions, and which may be seen at length in the second March volume of the Bollandists. Thus, as Benedict XIV. remarks, in all causes it is to be “ sedulously inquired whether the servants of God suffered distresses, and what sort of distresses, and with what patience and charity they bore them.”

What has been said in the preceding paragraphs must not however be pushed too far, that is, beyond the point for which there is evidence, or be understood in too exclusive a sense. It certainly does seem that the union of extraordinary actions with the frequent exercise of miraculous powers forms the differentia constituting the species *Saint*, that in a great multitude of cases, perhaps the majority, the heroicity of a virtue renders it misunderstood by those who have not a spiritual discernment, so that heroicity and singularity may sometimes be apparently and accidentally synonymous, and that the jealous suspecting opposition of good men is attached in the manner of an inseparable accident to the character of heroic virtue. But it must be remembered that this is not all ; this does not embrace the entire character of a Saint ; he is not merely an assemblage of eccentricities, nor is it the object of what has been said to hold him up as such. These are the prominent

ces in which his heroism juts out beyond the level of ordinary attainments, and therefore they are precisely the things by which we know him, but they are not his sum and substance. They cannot even be proceeded to in his cause until the virtuous discharge of his relative duties has been examined. Nay, in everything peculiar to or important in his particular station in life, an heroic degree of virtue is expected. If he has published any works or left manuscripts behind, they undergo a rigorous revision, and that of a most minute kind; and although their passing that revision does not imply any such approbation of the Holy See as that a man may not modestly impugn the doctrine of a Saint, yet it aids greatly towards the formation of our judgment about him. Thus it was objected in the Congregation as a hinderance in the cause of St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, that in her revelations our Lord was said to have been crucified with three nails; whereas St. Bridget had taught, and it was the more common and Catholic opinion, that He was crucified with four. The uncertainty about the relics of the holy nails of course throws no light upon the question, as it is supposed that some of them were not used to affix the Holy Body, but to fasten the title, or in the workmanship of the cross itself. Neither again does the impression of three nails on the heart of St. Clare of Montefalco go towards any settlement of the question, because, as the Bollandists and Cornelius Curtius tell us, raptures may be in

their substance divine, and yet in their circumstances conformed to species naturally perceived: and it is on this principle we must explain the circumstantial discrepancies we find in visions and ecstasies following on fervent meditations of the Passion, and the seeming contradictions between such books, for example, as those of St. Bridget and Sister Emmerich.\* Even reported sayings and sermons of a servant of God are scrutinized when his cause comes before the Congregation. For instance: the Dominicans affirmed that the blood which our Lord shed during the triduo of His Passion remained hypostatically united to His divinity;† the Fran-

\* It should also be remembered that when the Holy See approves of the private revelations of St. Hildegarde, St. Bridget, and St. Catherine of Sienna, she only claims our assent on *human*, not divine, faith. The words in Cardinal à Turrecremata's approbation of St. Bridget's revelations are, "that they can be read in Church in the same way the books of other doctors, and the histories and legends of the Saints." See also Melchior Canus. 12. 3. and Cajetan, Martinus del Rio ap. Azeved.

† Quod Verbum semel assumpit nunquam dimisit, moraliter loquendo de partibus ad integratatem corporis necessariis, C. physice loquendo de particulis minimis sine quibus stat integrum corpus, N. Ita intelligendus venit D. Th. inf. q. 54, a. 2, ad 3, dum dicit totum sanguinem qui de corpore Christi fluxit, in corpore Christi resurrexisse: hoc, inquam, verificatur moraliter de toto sanguine qui fuit necessarius ad integratatem corporis in statu resurrectionis, non vero physice de toto omnino, etiam minimis particulis non necessariis. Unde Pius II, in bulla ad abbatem S. Mariae Xantonensis dioecesis, quam vidisse se ait Silvester in rosa aurea tract. 3, q. 81, dicit fidei veritati non repugnare, asserere Redemptorem nostrum de sanguine in cruce effuso, ob ipsius passionis memoriam et fidelium consolationem, partem aliquam in terris reliquise.

Ex dictis colligis sanguinem Christi etiam in triduo mortis manuisse hypostaticē unitum Verbo; tum quia resumendus erat in corpore resurgentē; hac etiam ratione caro et anima inter se sep-

ciscans denied it. During the Easter of 1462 St. James de la Marche, preaching at Brescia, asserted the Franciscan doctrine, and said that the Blood shed in the Passion could not rightly receive the cultus latræ. The next day a Dominican preached, and branded St. James's proposition as heretical. James of Brescia, the Dominican inquisitor, requested St. James by private letters to retract his assertion, as having been formally declared heretical in the cathedral of Barcellona by command of Clement VI. The next Tuesday however St. James publicly repeated his doctrine in a sermon, whereupon the inquisitor summoned him to answer for his faith under pain of an anathema. The bishop of Brescia interposed to bring about a reconciliation, and Pius II. refused to solve the doubt, but by a brief freed St. James from the charge

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aratæ manserunt unitæ Verbo; tum quia alias si consecratus fuisse calix in triduo mortis, divinitas non fuisset per concomitantiam sub speciebus vini, quod est contra Trid. sess. 13, c. 3. Secus dicendum de præputio et sanguine effuso in circumcisione quia non erant resumenda in resurrectione.

*Nota* contrarium sententiam quosdam ordinis F. F. Minorum prædicasse circa annum 1352, sub Clemente VI. et anno 1462, sub Pio II, contentionemque acrem inde ortam inter præfatos Fratres Minores et F. F. Prædicatores oppugnantes. Re delata ad summum pontificem Pium II, utrinque coram ipso et cœtu cardinalium disputatum est, Pio II et majore parte cardinalium in favorem sententiæ Prædicatorum opinantibus: non fuit tamen questio definita, ne multitudo Minorum, cuius erat contra Turcas prædictio necessaria, offendetur. Imo Pius II, decima quinta die ante mortem constitutione edita, vetuit ne quis opinionem Minorum proscripteret ut hæreticam, donec questio per sanctam Sedem definiretur. Ita Spondanus ad annum 1462. Porro hoc F. F. Minorum sententia, licet nondum huc usque proscripta, e scholis tamen est eliminata, utpote nec pia nec secura, inquit Suares. *Billuart de Incarnat.* vii. 2. *sub fin.*

of heresy, and forbid either Dominicans or Franciscans to moot the question again, but to expect the decision of the Holy See. No express definition came out, but the Council of Trent having defined the Blood to be part of Christ, Cardinal de Lugo declares that the Franciscan doctrine can no longer be maintained without incurring the note of heresy. Under Paul V. then the doubt was started whether all this was not a sufficient obstacle to the resumption of the cause of St. James de la Marche. The case was handed to Cardinal Bellarmine, who, after carefully examining what had been done in the matter by Pius II. decided in favour of the resumption. The Saint was formally beatified by Urban VIII.; but when his canonization was proposed, the promoter of the faith brought the whole matter up again, and succeeding in quashing the cause until the reign of Innocent XII., who appointed a Congregation of theologians to examine the doctrine of St. James. They having decided that the opinion was a probable one, so far as any definitions existing in his time were concerned, the cause was resumed, and finished under Benedict XIII. This history will give some idea of the methods of procedure, as well as the spirit, of the Sacred Congregation.

After his works and manuscripts have been revised, the life of the servant of God is then examined with reference to the three theological virtues; his exercise of them, that of charity especially, is established by manifold heroic acts proved by competent testimony. In the three

theological virtues, heroicity is always required ; on the four cardinal virtues heroicity is required in those alone which have a special bearing upon his office and position in life ; of such importance is the discharge of relative duties considered ! It is this definite and orderly discussion of the theological and cardinal virtues which has impressed itself so completely upon the form and arrangement of modern Italian biographers ; that fourfold division into facts, virtues, gifts, and miracles, which so entirely mystifies all chronology, and is mostly so teasing to English readers by its apparently awkward methodism. There can be no doubt but that Bacci's biography of St. Philip Neri would be far more life-like and captivating if it were arranged in chronological order ; the absence of this destroys all the light and shade of a life, and the development of a Saint is in itself, especially when he is a founder, of immense interest. But it may be questioned whether as spiritual reading and a help to mental prayer, a life written on the Italian method is not the best of the two. Anyhow there can be no doubt that it is the processes of the Congregation which have introduced this style of biography.

As a very ancient instance of referring heroic actions to the theological virtues, we may quote that of St. Athanasius, who refers St. Anthony's victories over the demons to an heroic exercise of the theological virtue of hope. The controversy as to whether the theological virtues are necessarily connected with the moral, and the

moral with one another, does not enter into this question, because all admit that if not necessarily, at least in order to perfection, these connexions must certainly exist, and perfection is precisely what comes under consideration in the causes of the servants of God. The council of Vienne under Clement V. declared it to be the more probable opinion, that the theological virtues are infused into infants as well as adults in baptism; and Suarez gathers from the Council of Trent, that infused habits of faith, hope, and charity are given in justification; so that the connexion of the theological virtues with each other is not merely from their own nature, but from God's liberality in the first infusion of them. Hence the heroic exercise of one of the three is accounted adequate proof, if none other is at hand, for the other two as well; but inasmuch as the connexion of the moral virtues with the theological is an open question, the Thomists maintaining the affirmative, the Scotists the negative, heroicity is required of the servant of God, at least in those of the moral virtues which more immediately bear upon his relative duties, independent of his heroic exercise of faith, hope, and charity.

But to go a little more into this scrutiny about relative duties; with ecclesiastics a most important inquiry instituted by the Congregation regards their obtaining Church preferment, their reluctance to accept it, their humility in the discharge of its duties, and the like. If the servant of God held high dignity, a complete stand is

made till the postulators show his freedom from ambition, nay, his aversion to the promotion, and his acceptance only in virtue of holy obedience. Some of the Saints have been remarkable for their steady and successful rejection of dignities; this was eminently the case with St. Philip Neri, St. Francis Borgia, St. Bernard, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bernardino of Sienna, St. Vincent Ferrer, and St. Philip Benizi, the great legislator of the Servites, who fled from Viterbo and hid himself in a mountain, when the Cardinals were going to elect him Pope. Others again have accepted preferment after much struggling and in obedience to a precept of holy obedience, as was the case with St. Lawrence Justinian, St. Andrea Corsini, St. Peter Damian, and the Blessed Nicolas Albergatus. St. Gregory the Great fled from his elevation, as John the deacon tells us; St. Gregory VII. says violent hands were laid on him in order to make him pope. The same is related of Victor III., Gelasius II., Gregory X., St. Celestine V., and the glorious Pius V. When Clement XI. was elected pope, he refused to accept the tiara, and he was so determined in his refusal that four theologians were consulted as to whether he could continue to resist the will of the electors without grave sin. One of these theologians was the Blessed Joseph Mary Tommasi; and their answer was in the negative. Some time afterwards Clement created the Blessed Joseph Mary a cardinal; he out of humility refused, and persisted in his refusal; Clement

playfully turned against the holy theologian the arguments he himself had used to force his Holiness to ascend the papal throne, and compelled Tommasi to accept the dignity. In the cause of every servant of God who held ecclesiastical dignities this question is rigidly discussed, as we may see from the Acts of Pius V. St. Francis of Sales, and the Venerable Bellarmine; and when the cause of Innocent XI. was introduced, the promoter of the faith, urging some ill-natured calumnies of Bayle, objected to the means he had used for obtaining a certain prelacy which paved the way to the cardinalate; and had he been able to substantiate his facts the cause would never have been introduced: but it was shown that then, as now, peevish, disappointed, and spiteful men were in the habit of transmitting packets of illnatured gossip from Rome to their correspondents in other countries, especially when the characters of men of note were concerned, in order to make themselves of a little transient importance; and that this was the way in which Bayle had obtained his information, which was satisfactorily disproved by weighty documents.

But, at the risk of being tedious, in order to prove the solicitude with which the Church exacts a virtuous discharge of relative duties from those who are to be raised upon her altars by the solemnity of canonization, let us bring together a few details, which will be found full of interest, and capable of throwing great light upon the whole of our present subject. If the

servant of God, whose cause is under consideration, has been sovereign pontiff, then, independent of the examination his life undergoes as a bishop and as a secular prince, particular attention is paid to such points as the following: whether he has bestowed too much time on politics and secular cares, whether he has practised meditation, sought to advance in humility, bestowed dignities, especially the cardinalate, upon worthy and "*reluctant*" persons, whether he has been energetic in forwarding foreign missions, in watching jealously over ecclesiastical discipline, and defending the rights of the Holy See, and whether in his court and personal deportment there has been more of the emperor than the pope. In fact, St. Bernard's book to Pope Eugenius is taken as the ideal of heroic virtue in the supreme pontificate; and in a long list of canonized and beatified popes, upwards of seventy, most wonderfully has all this heroic virtue been set forth for the comfort and edification of the Church.

In the causes of cardinals special attention is paid to their obedience, frugality, residence, care of their titular Church, sincerity and boldness in counselling the pope, and cheerful submission when he has decreed contrary to their advice. Thus Baronius, when cardinal, lived as plainly as when he was a simple Oratorian; and the same may be said of the frugality and modesty of the Venerable Bellarmine and the B. Tommasi. Cardinal Bessarion affords an illustrious example of freedom in counselling the

pope, and every one will remember the well-known courage of St. Pius V. when he was cardinal. But it was actually a matter to be considered by the Congregation whether the Venerable Cardinal Ximenes had not offended by excess from his having once said, perhaps in joke, that the pope ought to have a "*bit of a frightening*" now and then. The conduct of cardinals in their legations is also a subject of most jealous scrutiny when their causes come before the Congregation.

An equally minute inquiry is instituted into the manner in which bishops have discharged their episcopal duties. An eminent spiritual writer has remarked, that the elevation to the episcopate has in most instances been found to be the cause of relaxed strictness and mortification; this therefore is inquired into. But one example will be enough to show to what details the scrutiny descends. The zeal of the apostles in giving confirmation as soon as they heard of the conversion of Samaria is looked upon as laying a kind of precept upon bishops; and it is inquired whether the servant of God has been distinguished by a zeal for that sacrament of which he is the ordinary minister, and special mention is made of this in the bull of St. Turibius's canonization, and it is also related of St. Wilfrid by Eddi Stephanus, his biographer. The conferring of orders, the granting of faculties to confessors, the care of ecclesiastical seminaries, the government of nuns, reverence to the Holy See, conduct towards secular princes and noble-

men, giving of patronage, expenditure of revenues, all these are jealously examined. For example, in the cause of the Venerable Cardinal Ximenes the promoter of the faith objected, that through his exertions several of his relations had married into high families, and that he had given them ample dowries; and in the cause of the Venerable Card. Bellarmine it was objected, that he had given pensions to poor relations.

Thus it is in the cause of religious from their vocation to their death, even to the making of their wills, if they had been elevated to the episcopate, and had had a dispensation to make a will, as in the case of the B. Alexander Sauli, the Barnabite; thus also it is with kings, noblemen, and laymen of whatever rank, from him who wore the crown of the holy roman empire down to the Loreto-going beggar, Benedict Joseph. This may be seen from the Acts of St. Wenceslaus of Bohemia, Henry the emperor, Edward of England, Leopold of Austria, Louis of France, Amadeus III. of Savoy, Casimir of Poland, and the good St. Elzear of Subrano. The justice and moderation of their wars form no slight difficulty in causes of this latter kind. Thus it is also with virgins, widows, and married persons. In all cases the inquiry is most rigid and minute. Even the circumstances of the death-bed are always jealously examined, as if it were the touchstone of final perseverance. Sudden deaths may sometimes impede the advancement of a cause, as rendering the proof of final perseverance incomplete; then indirect

and proximate evidence is carefully looked for, as in the case of St. Andrew Avellino and the B. Colette; or miracles immediately afterwards, as in the case of the B. Jordan, the general of the Dominicans. Scacchus tells us that the words with which the dying servants of God recommend their soul to Him must be weighed. When Benedict XIV. was promoter of the faith he objected to the words a servant of God had used on his death-bed about utter trust in God, seeming to exclude the notion of good works and to contravene the decisions of Trent. In like manner objection was taken to Cardinal Paul Buralis of Arezzo having administered the Viaticum to himself with his own hand, when It was brought him—a singularity contrary to the custom of the modern Church. But Cardinal de Lugo shows that the consent of the priest who brought the Blessed Sacrament excludes all fault in the matter. St. Dominic mentioned things to his own praise on his death-bed, whereas St. John of the Cross would not allow such things to be named in his presence. St. Martin and St. Thomas of Villanova were willing their lives should be prolonged for the good of others; St. Philip Neri and St. Francis of Sales quite rejected the idea. St. Francesca Romana was noted for having a death-bed without temptations, whereas other saints have died overclouded, as it were, with the shadow of God's judgments, while St. Romuald, St. John of God, and St. Cassian of Narni, died without witness of man. F. Consolini the Oratorian, like Cardinal Bellarmine,

seems to have prayed that he might not have the use of his reason on his death-bed, that he might thus avoid being treated like a saint and receiving visits of honour from distinguished personages. This was indeed the dictate of humility, but it also implies a confidence and spirit of abandonment which it makes one quite tremble to think of. To read the account of St. Andrew Avellino's death-bed, who would have supposed that from the loss of speech to explain his temptations, it should actually have presented difficulties to the Congregation of Rites? A Saint himself, St. Alphonso Liguori, thus relates it: "They say of St. Andrew Avellino that at the time of his death there came ten thousand demons to tempt him. During his agony he had so fierce a conflict with hell that all his good religious who were by trembled with fear. They saw the Saint's agitated face all swollen, so that it became quite black; his limbs quivered, and beat one against another as in the palsy; floods of tears flowed from his eyes; his head shook violently; all signs of the horrible battle in which he was engaged. Everyone wept with compassion, redoubled their prayers for him, and yet trembled with fear to see that even a Saint should have to die thus. They consoled themselves however in seeing that the Saint often threw his eyes round, as if looking for some one to help him, and fixed them on a devout picture of our Lady, and they remembered that he had often said in his life-time, that Mary would have to be his refuge in

the hour of death. At length it pleased God that the conflict should end in the glorious victory of his servant: the quiverings of his body ceased, the swelling of his face went down and its natural colour returned; they saw him fix his eyes tranquilly upon the picture, and making a reverent inclination to it, as though Mary, as was believed, appeared to him at the moment, and he intended to thank her for her aid, he breathed out his soul gently into our Lady's arms with a smile of Paradise upon his face. At the very moment a Capuchiness, also lying in her agony, turned to the nuns by her bed, and said, Say a Hail Mary, for at this moment a Saint has died."\* Yet it was about this death-bed that the cool judgment and safe acuteness of the Congregation found room for doubt and hesitation; what confidence may we not have in processes which carry with them the weight of such an approbation?

Of course it need hardly be added that the sins of the servants of God, and the signs of heroic repentance, are sought into with even a yet keener jealousy. Indeed a separate volume might be written, in which almost every duty of the different relations of life might be illustrated from the processes in these causes. It is enough to say that to the whole examination is given the character of the harshest criminal proceeding, with this significant difference, that the Congregation is reminded that there is no

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\* *Glorie di Maria*, i. 94, 95.

*necessity* of settling these causes in the face of a doubt ; they can be quashed, and silence imposed, whereas in criminal trials some judgment must be given, and the doubt is in favour of the accused, whereas here it is decisive against the servant of God. The working of this is, as was intended, to strangle causes which are a little defective, as being the more safe method of procedure. The number of witnesses, the classification of their testimony, and the ingenuous interrogatoria sent from Rome into the country at the formation of the processes, all increase the difficulty of getting a cause through the different stages, and add proportionably to the weight of the judgment when given. Benedict XIV. accounts for the few Saints which the solitary orders have produced mainly to the difficulty of getting witnesses ; so that it seems as if those holy recluses sacrificed for the love of God some portion of their accidental glory in heaven as well as men's praise on earth. Indeed since the decrees of Urban VIII., and the beautiful machinery which Clement XI. invented for the Sacred Congregation of Rites, no human process (putting out of sight entirely the promised assistance of the Holy Ghost,) can be conceived more morally certain of discovering truth than the one instituted in the causes of beatification and canonization.

Thus we have most ample guarantee in the case of every one whom the Church has either beatified or canonized, that they have been distinguished by a calm, persevering, virtuous dis-

charge of their relative duties, that all which men consider most solid and practical in moral goodness has been exhibited by them even in an heroic degree, and that the extraordinary and unusual actions which they have performed have only whetted the acuteness and more effectually aroused the jealous spirit of scrutiny in the ecclesiastical tribunals. The Sacred Congregation is not, as it were, dazzled, taken by surprise, and betrayed into a favourable decision by the brilliance of certain heroic feats, but works its way through masses of evidence and accumulated doubts with all the cautious moderation and diligent solemnity which we should expect to find where there was that deep sense of responsible co-operation implied in the promise of the assisting presence of the Holy Spirit. Heroic virtue is in itself very liable to misapprehension, even since the publication of the Christian code of morals, and although the excellence of the evangelical counsels is of faith. Aristotle's idea of magnanimity is a picture of monster virtue; and most students of the Ethics will have come to the conclusion that the philosopher's magnanimous man would have been almost intolerable in society, and certainly both disliked and misunderstood, and he will be ready to join in poor Don Abbondio's querulous impatience with the "fidgettiness" of the Saints, when Manzoni brings him in the *Promessi Sposi* in contact with Frederic Borromeo. If the whole sum of the Christian life be to grow Christ-like, to conform ourselves to His Image,

His Image as visible to us in the gracious mystery of the Incarnation, if it be (speaking humanly,) to transfer ourselves into Him and His place, to make His will our will, His love and hatred our love and hatred too, and, at least in our attitude towards the world, to stand where He stood and as He stood, or, more truly and more awfully, where He stands and as He stands—if this be so, and if it be that God's ways are far above out of our sight; then in proportion as the Saints grow towards His Image must their ways be just so far above our comprehension as they are before us in grace. We cannot measure them by our measures; we cannot bring them within our rules. Our tests will not *always* tell upon their characters, nor reveal what is involved and contained in their ways of acting. So far therefore ought we to be from that venturesome profaneness which mounts into the judge's seat to pass sentence on the Saints, that where we do not understand what their actions mean, nay, even where we are perplexed and things look the wrong way, we ought to have a moral conviction, springing from humility, that even in proportion to the strangeness and the doubtfulness of an action, where Saints are concerned whose sanctity the judgment of the Church has put beyond the lawfulness of a doubt, is the likelihood or more than likelihood, that there is something heroic about it which we do not yet fathom; and just for this simple reason that the Saint's ways are in their poor measure like God's ways, far above out of the

sight of us who are below. Even they who are not irreligious, but are lagging behind, when they look upon the Saints see like the blind man in the Gospel only men as trees walking. All the Saints alike, whether they be anchorites of the desert, or missionary bishops, or martyr virgins, or pontiffs sanctifying themselves beneath the bewildering pressure of affairs, all equally, as we read their Lives, present themselves to us like St. Paul, as deceivers and yet true.

But it may be asked, where are the limits to this? They are to be found in this particular, that all these peculiarities do not in the main put a Saint beyond the embrace of our imitation, when under similar circumstances; and the members of the Congregation of Rites are supplied by Cardinal Bona and others with tests for discerning the rightness or wrongness of these strange actions, which, like Abraham's proceeding to slay his son, are usually set down in the Saints to a special instinct of the Holy Spirit. First it is to be seen whether the rest of the Saint's life is eminent for sanctity, and in particular for patience and charity, whether there are any circumstances from which we may infer that the impulse was so vehement as to be morally irresistible, as in the case of St. Paul's conversion, whether peace and tranquillity of mind have followed the performance of the action, whether anything beyond the strength of nature has occurred in the action, and this Suarez illustrates by St. Benedict's giving an obedience

to St. Maurus to walk on the water to Placidus, and Benedict XIV. by the admission of Jacoba Settesoli to the death-bed of St. Francis of Assisi in spite of the cloister; and, finally, as Cardinal Borromeo adds, whether the strange action has been successful. The precept of Almighty God to the prophet Osee about his wife, and to Abraham about his son, are of course the scripture exemplifications of these things. To all this might be added, if space would allow of it, most curious illustrations of the ingenious jealousy of the ordeal through which the cause of the servant of God passes with regard to the claim of miraculous powers. We cannot do more here than remind the reader, that in order to avoid arguing in a circle, the virtues are required to be proved independently of the miracles and without any support from them, that special jealousy is shown in the examination of miracles which do not surpass the power of *invisible* natural powers, those e. g. of a good angel, and that in many, if not in most cases, where several servants of God have been invoked, the subsequent miracle cannot be referred to any one of them in such way as to be available in the cause, as in the case of the Seven Blessed Founders of the Servites.\* Indeed we cannot do better than refer our readers to the treatment of St. John Francis Regis's miracles by the able and good Giovanni Maria Lancisio, who bequeathed his medical library and patrimo-

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\* But see Bened. XIV. I. iv. pt. 1. c. v. 16 et seqq.

ny to the hospital of Santo Spirito, and who was employed by the Congregation of Rites as *medius pro veritate* in the causes of the servants of God, and has left dissertations of great value on the miracles of St. James de la Marche, St. Stanislas Kostka, and St. John Francis Regis.

Indeed, putting out of view all idea of divine assistance, and looking at the matter simply as a question of evidence, it is hardly possible to conceive any process for sifting human testimony more complete, more ingenious, or more rigid than the one scrupulously adhered to by the Congregation of Rites in this respect. Much depends on the decision, and there is no necessity for coming to a decision at all; these two things are continually before the eyes of the judges, and render the ordeal one of almost incredible strictness. No one can study the great work of Benedict XIV. on Canonization, or peruse the decrees of Urban VIII. and Clement XI. without feeling the utmost confidence in any narrative of facts, however supernatural, which comes out of the trial confirmed and approved upon the whole: and we are now merely speaking of it as a question of human testimony which has come out undestroyed from the long, intricate, and jealous cross-questioning of a most ingeniously contrived system of cavil and objection. A fact only requires the appearance of being supernatural to awaken against it every suspicion; every method of surprise and detection is at once in array against it; it is allowed no mercy, no advantage of a doubt, and any

thing rather than the benefit of clergy. All this really gives to Lives of Saints drawn from the processes a trust-worthiness which scarcely any other historical or biographical works can possess; and enables them to claim from the reader at the very least a *general* confidence which he can hardly give to any other narrative of facts in the world. Let any one look at the way in which miracles are dealt with in the Congregation, their accurate division into three classes, the necessity of what is called *instantaneity* in order to distinguish a miracle from a *gratia*, the length of time required to prove the absence of relapse, which was thirteen years in the case of a nun cured of epilepsy by the Blessed Hyacintha Marescotti, and is extremely long in hydrophobia and some other complaints, the interrogatories, the requisites in witnesses, the presence of the first physicians of Italy and their opinions in writing, and sundry other precautions. Many a candid Protestant would be surprised, if he only took the trouble to peruse a few of the processes of the Congregation in matters of beatification and canonization. But if we attempted to do justice to this subject, we should be led far beyond our present bounds: it will be enough here to subjoin a few cases in illustration.

If, for instance, a case of recovery of sight is investigated, first of all, the blindness has to be proved, and whether the man was born blind or became so afterwards; secondly, the duration of the blindness; thirdly, the recovery of sight

with its qualities ; fourthly, the opinion of medical and scientific men has to be adduced as to the cause of the blindness, (if, that is to say, it has not been since birth;) fifthly, it is inquired whether it would be *possible* to attribute the recovery of sight to any natural cause without having recourse to the idea of a miracle ; sixthly, whether the recovery was instantaneous, unless it be a miracle of the second class, and then instantaneity is not a necessary requisite ; and if neither witnesses nor medical men can state the cause of the blindness, no decision can be come to. Hence in the causes of St. Agnes and Blessed Peter Fourrier, some miracles of this sort were rejected from their not being instantaneous, and so possibly attributable to a natural cause. They might be, and probably were, miracles before God, but they were wanting in the demonstration necessary to establish them as miracles before the Church.

Again: when Benedict XIV. was promoter of the faith in the cause of the Blessed Hyacinta de' Marescotti, there was a case, already alluded to, of a nun cured of hereditary epilepsy after her twenty-fifth year, without having any crisis, or receiving any benefit from medical treatment ; on the contrary, it appeared that the remedies which had been administered to her were of a deleterious character. The promoter objected that the process had been formed only eighteen months after the last paroxysm, and that the nun might be seized again, and therefore that the miracle ought not to be approved ;

neither was it approved till after thirteen years had elapsed: and in the cause of St. James de la Marche, a miracle of this nature was rejected altogether. Again: in a case of hæmorrhage from a wound, staunched at the invocation of St. Stanislas, there was an appearance of exaggeration in the account of the witnesses, as according to the laws of science, death must on their own showing have preceded the invocation. Lancisio, writing pro veritate and so against the miracle, admitted the exaggeration, but still allowed the matter to be miraculous for other reasons, and recommended the Congregation to admit it, but in vain; it was rejected, on the ground that anything like a slur on the witnesses is always to be considered an insuperable objection in the Congregation.

In like manner after discussing the question of relapses, and with reference to the first miracle proposed in the cause of St. John of the Cross, Benedict XIV. thus sums up: "These things being premised, and the argument being confined to relapses strictly understood, and to causes of beatification and canonization, and also to the approbation of miracles in them, in which approbation there is no question of relapse, unless the first healing has been perfect, absolute, without crisis, and instantaneous:—all this, I say, being premised, their opinion is to be followed who say that extreme strictness is to be used in ranking such cures among miracles; for, although in themselves and before God they may be miracles, yet they do not ap-

pear such before the Church. We must also proceed with caution if any new cause of the disease is alleged by way of getting rid of the idea of a relapse, and so bolstering up the miracle; for medical men have always heaps of such causes ready at their fingers' ends; so this must be sedulously discussed. All difficulty however will cease, if it can be made plain that the disease returned for the greater glory of God, or if the sick man prayed to be cured only for a time; and with these cautions the first miracle in the cause of St. John of the Cross was approved." And later on he says, "The heretics, James Sercels and Warenfels, after treating on miracles, break out vehemently against the Roman Church, charging her with an over great facility in approving miracles; but if they will compare our rules and tests with their own, they will be obliged to confess that the scrutiny of the Holy See and Catholic bishops in the matter of miracles is more severe than the one they themselves propose."

The pious jealousy of the Congregation might also be illustrated, and that most interestingly, not only by particular cases of its treatment of miracles, but also from its method of procedure in granting proper offices and masses. We might instance the whole history of the fluctuating controversy about the stigmata of St. Catherine of Sienna, the proper office of which with lections for the second nocturn is now granted to the Dominican order, and the dioceses of Sienna and Pisa besides. Deeply instructive

examples might be drawn from the cases of the invention of the Blood of Christ at Mantua, which was probably some that flowed miraculously from an image crucified by the Jews of Beyrouth, the translation of the Alma Domus Lauretana, and our Lady of the Pilar. But we have surely said enough for our object, which is simply to breed confidence in the reader by proving to him the existence of jealousy, criticism, sifting of evidence, solemn, tardy, judicial recognition, and a continually operative sense of responsibility before God and the Church ; and thus to show him with what amount of modest assurance a supernatural biography drawn from the processes may fairly claim his confidence, his patience, and his respect.

Having thus limited and qualified what might otherwise seem peremptory and exaggerated in the statement of our case, so far as it regards the performance of extraordinary actions and the exercise of miraculous powers, and having endeavoured to gain the reader's kindly confidence by some samples of the way in which authorities go to work in investigating these matters, let us pursue the main current of our argument. Now we have before us in the one work of Benedict XIV. the cases of about two thousand and seventy-two servants of God considered with reference to their cultus or claim of cultus from the Church : this is a rough enumeration, which may be considered as falling short of the real number. Further, we maintain that in all these instances the exercise of mirac-

ulous powers and the performance of actions which seem to lie beyond the limits of worldly prudence are manifest to a greater or less degree, and in all to a degree sufficiently striking to form a characteristic. The birth-places and residences of these holy persons are as various as the lands the sun shines upon; the ages in which they lived are as many in number as are the centuries which have elapsed since the coming of our Lord; their rank and circumstances in life are about as various as the most versatile imagination can depict to itself; their biographers are of all classes and of all turns of mind, and with all the diversified prejudices which their times, age, temper, or position could produce; the imprimaturs of these biographies vary in dignity from the rare *eulogy* of the Master of the Sacred Palace down to the simple Nihil obstat of the Vicar-General of the least bishopric in the Brazils: but as the faith of these servants of God is one, and as the holy Church, whose children they are, is one, so are their miracles and the strange fashion of their heroic virtues one, and so is the instinct of the faithful to venerate them one also.

It would therefore be quite irrelevant to our purpose to select individual cases of miracle, or so called eccentricity, either for defence or attack. They exist in such portentous multitude, and in such equally portentous diversity, that we may be quite content to turn the most ingenious and sceptical sifter of human evidence loose upon the mass, let him wreak all his angry

craft upon it, and do his worst; and when he has gathered his spoil here and there, when he has done his long and mighty sum of subtraction, how little success will he have had in bringing the mountain down! Let us even grant him—on the common principles of evidence it is the wildest of all improbabilities—a hundred cases out of every thousand, nay, five hundred out of every thousand, and such tens and hundreds of thousands remain, that we must come back to the old inquiry at last, what is to be thought of all this? what is to be done with all this? The mind is positively overshadowed by the number and variety of cases which remain, even after the most unrestricted process of diminution has been gone through. Tease, and tear, and worry the gigantic mass of historical evidence as we will; make abatements for any amount of corruption, uncertainty, interpolation, forgery, superstition, and ignorance which the least modest exaction of an opponent could desire; assume any hypothesis of complicated systematic world-wide yet undetected fraud which we can muster credulity to swallow, and which would be far beyond what the scholarlike Bollandists would ask of us in behalf of their documents; lay bold hands on missal collects, breviary lections, martyrology and popes' decrees; and then after all we must sit down wearied and peevish with our thankless and fruitless toil, and confronting the tremendous pile of tough unmanageable evidence before us, with a heavy-hearted suspicion that

we may have been doing despite to the grace of God in His Saints, we shall be obliged to proceed to form some judgment or other which shall not be absolutely disrespectful to the matter before us.

Let it next be considered, that so far the weight of Church authority, whatever weight that authority may have in this particular subject matter, has not been mingled with the *argument* at all. It has been alluded to simply as one among other features of this overwhelming mass of evidence; but our *argument* so far is perfectly independent of it and separate from it. It is submitted to the rational, intelligent, and considerate judgment of our Protestant readers. On what has been said hitherto common sense and common humility may conjointly pass their judgment without calling in theology to arbitrate at all. Let us now put the dilemma into which we have brought ourselves:—quantities of the Lives of the Saints, full of these miraculous incidents and extraordinary actions, are published in almost every language in which the Gospel of Christ is preached; they form the favourite reading of enthusiastic youth; they are the staple books in religious refectories, at the evening recreation of holy nuns, in colleges, seminaries, and ardent noviciates; the lections of the Breviary contain no insignificant number of anecdotes of a parallel sort; the mass and office of crowds of these Saints and Beati have been granted either to the universal Church, or to countries, or to dioceses, or to single cities,

or to entire religious orders, or to separate provinces and reforms of orders; relics of these servants of God are in almost every country of Christendom, authenticated by the sign and seal of the cardinal vicar, with a formally expressed faculty from him to the possessors, "to keep the said relics about them, to give them to others, to distribute them out of Rome, and to expose them to the public veneration of the faithful in any church, oratory, or chapel whatsoever;" the praising and revering of these relics is specified by St. Ignatius in his sixth rule as one means of keeping ourselves in harmony with the mind of the Church; anecdotes of these servants of God, many of them miraculous, many of them extraordinary, are found in the catechisms and devotional books by which the youthful members of the Church are instructed, and upon which they are trained, and they are never quoted there except in terms of reverential eulogy. Now can anything be conceived which bears more directly or with more important consequences upon the whole morality of the Universal Church? And can anything be imagined more awful than the idea that all this may be false, and that the Church may possibly err in the whole matter? Could there be a more complete triumph for the gates of hell than this, to have one perhaps who is a reprobate in the dungeons of hell, burning with hatred of God, and venerated upon the altars of the Universal Church, the pillar and ground of the truth? "In the Church," says St. Thomas\*

\* Quodlibet 9. qu. 7. art 16.

"there can be no damnable error; but this would be a damnable error, if he were venerated as a Saint who was in reality a sinner." "It is of great importance," says Melchior Canus,\* "to the morals of the Church that you should know to whom you ought to pay the cultus of religion. Wherefore if the Church could err in these matters it might make a grievous slip in morals. For there is very little difference between paying cultus to a devil and doing it to a damned person. So if the Church should enact a law of abstinence which was opposed either to reason or the Gospel, she would truly have erred disgracefully. Thus also she would err disgracefully in the doctrine of morals if she were to pass a law ordering cultus to be paid to one who was not a fit object of it; for this would be at variance at once with reason and the Gospel." The text of the canon law says precisely the same:† "Whosoever shall call the just unjust, and the unjust just, is abominable before God. Likewise he who says that a Saint is not a Saint, or on the other hand declares that he who is not a Saint is a Saint, is abominable before God;" and "Whosoever *believes* a man to be a Saint who is not one, and joins him to the society of God, *he violateth Christ.*"‡

Thus the Pope and his Sacred Congregations setting the example, general councils not reclaiming but rather acting similarly themselves, the immense Catholic episcopate consenting, the ap-

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\* l. 5. c. 5. concl. 3.

† Can. 57.

‡ Can. 58.

proved religious orders aiding and abetting—moral principles of dubious propriety and truthfulness, false examples of uncertain discretion and of unsound evidence, deleterious objects of imitation, and possible execrable objects of prayer, and a whole tone of thought, devotion, and feeling corrupt to its core and dangerous in the extreme, are the food wherewith the universal Church nourishes her youth, and replenishes her convents and her seminaries ! Where, if not here, have we a right to look with sober expectancy for the unfailing assistance of the Holy Ghost ? Where, if not here, may we not repose implicit confidence in the unerring voice of our spiritual Mother ? Alas ! who would not start back in amazement and in horror, if he looked upon the vast fields of Christendom, calculated the amount of this particular literature under consideration, pondered its tremendous influence and its far-seen consequences on and on into generations yet unborn, weighed the variety and importance of the papal, episcopal, and academical sanctions given to it—and then was told that all this *might be* wrong, was actually fallible ? Surely they who would make the infallibility of the Pope's ex-cathedra decrees depend upon their subsequent, at least tacit, acceptance by the universal Church, have here a case in point where the acceptance is not only not tacit, but where cardinals, bishops, prelates, doctors, religious orders, universities, and the courts of Catholic sovereigns, are vyeing to magnify the decrees of canonization, to extend their conse-

quences, and to publish them with more than royal or imperial pomp. Either all this, *in the main and as a system*, is true, or else the morals of the Catholic Church are eaten away to their very core. All this was going on before the Holy Council of Trent, yet we have no reclamation, but the contrary; it was actually systematized, and accidental abuses and extravagances retrenched by Urban VIII. and Clement XI., and greater finish and nicety given here and there by almost every succeeding pontiff, and Urban's Decrees, enforced by the Holy Roman Inquisition, have been everywhere received. If the Church is not committed in this matter *to some extent*, (to what extent will appear afterwards,) then language has ceased to have a meaning and common sense to be a guide.

Having thus looked at the question as involving the consent of the universal Church and implicating her in it, let us gather the matter up, where a theologian would most naturally look for it, to the proper and divine seat of the Church's unerring decrees, to the blessed Chair of Peter, where the pilot sits and wields the Spirit-guided helm. The horns of our dilemma will then be put thus: Either this claim, exercise and frequency of miraculous powers is *in the main* true, (for we have shown that the criticism of individual cases is irrelevant to the question from the very overpowering abundance of the evidence) or it is *in the main* false, and these actions lying beyond the pale of human prudence and the ordinary conventions of worldly wisdom, are either

*in the main* reprehensible, or they are *in the main* in some cases the fruits of a special instinct of the Holy Ghost, and in other cases exemplifications of virtue practised in an heroic degree. If the one is false and the other are reprehensible, then it is hard to conceive a case of more widely extended moral mischief, or one in which it would be more natural that we should hear the warning and rebuking voice of the Holy See. Yet what has been really the case? Urban VIII. has given the fullest of all sanctions to it by specifying and retrenching the abuses which had arisen in connexion with it; for no sanction is so clearly exempt from all suspicion of inadvertence or surprise as a specific reform.\* Sixtus V., in confirming the decree of the canonization of St. Didacus, spoke for a whole hour in proof of the infallibility of the decree. The decrees of canonization and beatification never light on any one whose life has not been distinguished in the two respects mentioned; many of the decrees relate instances in point with great applause; the office often contains others, when there are proper lections to the second nocturn; so that the Church by her Head actually, on the hypothesis of the adversary, holds up to the admiration and mutatis mutandis to the imitation of all her children what is either false, or superstitions, or foolish, or dubious, or all these things together. The pastors and doctors of

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\* See particularly the Constitution of that pope, *Sanctitas sua*; also Constitut. 39, given in 1625, the Declaratio of the same given in the October of the same year; and Constitut. 134, given in 1634.

the Church receive and applaud; the faithful embody it all in numberless devotions; and so the whole Body of Christ teaches and receives (according to the different views of opponents,) a possible, a probable, or an actual falsehood, one too whose roots are most intimately entwined with the whole of morals, and thus the gates of hell have triumphed in the most complete and brilliant manner over the immaculate Bride of Christ. If this bewildering notion be too horrible to be true, as no Catholic when he sees it thus drawn out will doubt for a moment, then it must needs be that this claim, exercise, and frequency of miraculous powers is *in the main* true, and these actions lying beyond the pale of human prudence and the ordinary conventions of worldly wisdom, *in the main* fruits of a special instinct of the Holy Ghost or exemplifications of virtue practised in an heroic degree.

This is all we claim for the Lives of the Saints: and if this be not true, what third road is there between the horns of this dilemma? Be it well remembered that we only speak of these miracles and extraordinary actions *in the main*. We leave each particular instance of them free to criticism, free to be weighed by the merits of its own evidence, with the light of its own probability and nothing more around it. Of course, in saying this it is manifest that we must except the particular miracles quoted by the Holy See in its decrees; whatever weight that approbation may have, and which we have yet to examine, all Catholics will agree in the

indecency of making those particular miracles the subject of doubt or contestation ; for even those who seem to have doubted the right of the Church to pronounce infallibly in the matter of canonization *in the general*, have added that no one can impugn any given decree *in particular* without being guilty of scandal and impiety. But bating these few thousand cases, we claim nothing more for the matter in question, than the general admission required above. No doubt some biographers are more judicious, more critical, more discerning than others ; some are more free from the prejudices of locality or the kindly esprit de corps of a religious order than others ; and for this reason we have in the present Series preferred Lives written later, and from the calmly sifted judicial processes, to such as have been composed on the spot where the Saint died, and amid the first effervescence of popular devotion, a proceeding diametrically opposed to the conduct one should have pursued in reference to any other biographies, where the works of contemporaries and fellow-countrymen are selected rather than others. Still the general tone, the general prevalence of the supernatural, the perpetual recurrence of these extraordinary and unusual modes of action, remain the same : give the largest allowance you please to the prejudices and tempers of biographers, as before to the possibility of fraud and error, the huge mass of facts is so little diminished that it continues in the main to be the

same, most powerfully influencing doctrine, and still more powerfully influencing morals.

Having thus stated the case in its principal bearings, we may now advance to the grand practical questions involved in it. It follows from the very intimate connexion between hagiology and morals, that there is no subject-matter in the handling of which calmness, caution, and discretion are more imperatively required; sound and judicious criticism ought to be applied; the utmost carefulness shown to claim no more authority for a thing than it really possesses or may fairly vindicate to itself. A man ought to labour in such a work under an abiding sense of the responsibility which he is incurring; and must first ascertain to himself as well as he is able, not the intrinsic goodness of his end only, but the propriety of attempting it under given time, place, and circumstances. All that was done under the pontificate of Urban VIII. and by Cardinal Lambertini himself when he was raised to the papal throne, shows how carefully the authorities of the Church would have a man pick his way amidst the dangers which beset so delicate a subject-matter; and when he has done all that prudence and deliberation and the counsel of pious and learned men can suggest, there still remains to be continued what he must have started with—earnest prayer, and a most humble submission of the whole, not to the judgment of the Church only, but also to that of his immediate superiors. Such we may conceive to

have been the temper of mind in which the Bollandists entered upon their generous and edifying labours ; but how few are there who would venture to look upon themselves as thus qualified either to write original Lives of Saints, or to make compilations where their own erudition, criticism, and discretion would have to co-ordinate and give a character to the whole ! Hence came the peculiarities of the present Series. Suggested and encouraged, nay, almost eagerly forwarded, by many wise and eminent men, it was remembered from the first that so delicate a subject was it, so prolific at all times in giving offence in this or that direction, that even in the beginning of St. Philip Neri's Oratory one of his serious troubles arose from the very fact of his being falsely delated to the Pope, for permitting indiscreet narrations of extraordinary actions of the Saints in the discourses at San Girolamo. It was on this account that seven rules were laid down for the conduct of the present Series, in order to avoid as much as possible all exercise of editorial private judgment, and to make it as safe and abundant in edification as under many disadvantageous circumstances it could be ; and the extensive and rapidly extending sale of the volumes seems as it were to have given an approbation to the peculiar features of the undertaking.

1. It was resolved to choose translations rather than original works, in order that what was inevitably forfeited in pure style and spirited narrative might be more than compensated by

the absence of indiscreet criticism, offensive apology, and all expression of individual opinion; and it was laid down as a rule, that, as far as possible, the Lives of the Saints distinguished for outward and active charity should precede those more peculiarly mystical and supernatural. It need hardly be said that in a work of such magnitude Editors cannot always control the coming in of manuscript, and this rule it has been found impossible to adhere to as strictly as could be wished.

2. It was considered a duty, to be scrupulously faithful to the originals translated, not in the way of literal translation, for this is often the worst of infidelities, but in carefully giving the whole work, except in the case of additional or irrelevant matter, and the fact and amount of that omission to be accurately stated in each case. Otherwise what confidence could be reposed in the work? On what principle shall we pick and choose? who will commission us to exercise this latitudinarian right to cut down or omit or change? Shall we not mutilate, nay, in effect, falsify, history? Are we not arrogantly constituting ourselves judges of accredited authors, exercising a censorship over censors who have already pronounced their Nihil obstat, and taking even more upon ourselves than if we had ourselves composed original Lives of the Saints? The humble office of truthful translators seemed the one best calculated for the object in view, and our ambition has not gone beyond it.

3. Pains were to be taken to select such biographies as were held in esteem in Catholic countries, and widely circulated among the faithful.

4. In all cases *imprimaturs* were to be looked to as guides in this selection.

5. The Lives drawn up for or from the processes were always to be preferred, although often with less literary attractiveness about them than Lives written with more freedom. The object of the Series is rather spiritual than literary; and as all masters of the spiritual life tell us that the biographies of the Saints should be read slowly, pausatim and a little at a time, the style of the processes seemed in some degree more suitable.

6. Notes were to be avoided as much as possible, as so many vents of private opinion, and involving more or less the office of critic or censor; and quite sufficient literary scope for this, so far as it might be necessary, could be given in the Preface.

7. The whole was to be submitted to the authority of immediate superiors, and the Series put in every respect under their absolute control: and certainly so far as a judgment can be formed from outward appearances, the success of the Series has been beyond what the most sanguine promoters of it could have anticipated, both in the way of sale, of numerous expressions of sympathy and encouragement from those who have been edified by it, together with some singular confessions on the part of inquirers still

out of the True Fold of the attracting influence which it has had upon them in favour of Catholic doctrine and practices. May Almighty God vouchsafe to bless it still more as a weak instrument for His greater glory in the hearts and secret lives of men !

Such were the reflections which gave rise to the Series, and such the principles on which it was to be conducted. But a thoughtful man, who may have been in some degree impressed by what has been said, may reasonably urge, "All this may be very true ; but if I am to allow these biographies to exercise an influence on my faith and practice, if I am to let confidence succeed to jealousy, and permit them to tell upon my tone and habits of mind as I see them tell upon those of others, by what practical canons shall I be guided ? How shall I regulate this influence ? what standard of appeal shall I have ? what simple tests, easy to comprehend and always ready at hand, shall I habitually apply to any difficulties which may arise in my journey through this confessedly supernatural land ?" Let us try to discover such tests.

In reading the Lives even of canonized Saints a man may frequently meet with instances of the supernatural, and of seemingly eccentric conduct, which to his peculiar temperament seem unlikely, indiscreet, startling, ludicrous, perhaps offensive, though his humility would hardly allow him to commit himself to such words. Now it is true the Saint is canonized,

and he would not for the world venture upon anything like sitting in judgment upon the Church ; but the offending points are not mentioned in the decrees one way or another ; there is no judgment of the Church about them ; it only so far tells upon them that they cannot (supposing them authentic) be dismissed with contempt or disrespect ; but otherwise they are quite open to criticism. The reader is obviously free to use his own judgment both on the credibility and on the edifying character of the anecdotes in question :—how shall his judgment proceed ? On some such principles as the following, which we venture to lay down, as safe and prudent, and steering clear of anything like puerile credulity on the one hand, and profane rashness with the Saints of God on the other. But before we begin let us remind the reader of an anecdote in the Life of St. Philip Neri, which contains an apposite lesson.\* “Natale Rondanini, doctor of Faenza, was one day reading the Life of the Saint, and was come to the chapter where it is said that Philip having fallen into a deep moat as he was carrying bread to a poor family, was seized by the hair by an angel, and delivered from that danger ; and also farther on he read how that Pope Clement VIII. was cured of the gout. Now he was a little incredulous about this, and many doubts passed through his mind as to whether these two circumstances were true

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\* Vol. II. p. 261.

or not; wherefore the Saint appeared to him in the night in a dream, clad in a bright and glittering vestment, and gently rebuked him for his lack of faith, in doubting whether what he had read of him in his Life were true. Natale, trembling and quaking, repented him of his unbelief, and the Saint's admonition was so deeply impressed on his mind, that ever afterwards, it mattered not who was present, when he heard persons reasoning about the Saints or their miracles, he would say to them, 'Play with children, but let the Saints alone.' "

I. *Analogy with the faith.* This would be the first criterion. A man who went to work with the wary reverence befitting the subject, would first look to see how far the facts which startled him were in analogy with the faith; if they were not, then the probabilities against them would be immensely increased; of course in the case of actual discrepancy they would be at once rejected with scorn; if they were in analogy with the faith, then the duty of still farther suspending his judgment would be obvious, and he would have no difficulty in acknowledging it. Thus, for example, the miraculous things found in the heart of St. Clare of Montefalco are in analogy with the Catholic doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and were a strikingly beautiful illustration of it. St. Philip Neri's discerning a youth to be a priest by the shining of the sacerdotal character on his forehead is plainly in analogy with the faith. The same may be said of instances of a beautiful Infant appearing in Hosts,

and similar occurrences, quite in analogy with the faith, that is, such as we might naturally expect on the hypothesis that the faith was true. Hence when John the Deacon tells us, and even an author bearing the name of St. John Damascene gives his countenance to the story, that St. Gregory the Great was said by his prayers to have delivered the soul of the Emperor Trajan from hell, we reject the story, because it is not in analogy with the faith.\* St. Antiochus† tells us of a monk on Mount Sinai, famous for chastity, who had a vision in which he saw the souls of the Apostles and Saints in dense darkness, and the souls of the Jews in shining light. Whereupon he apostatized from Christianity and became a Jew, because he prized his false vision above the analogy of the faith. So when it was deposed of St. Dominic, St. Theresa, and St. Louis Gonzaga, that they had never had a temptation against purity, it was received with most unkindly but judicious suspicion by the Congregation, as seemingly out of analogy with the faith. When St. Bernardino of Sienna, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, introduced the cultus of the Holy Name of Jesus, he was accused to the Pope of introducing a new and suspected cultus, and it required all the eloquence and ability of St. John

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\* John the Deacon expressly says that this legend was unknown in Rome, and existed only among the English: and the *Oratio de Mortuis* is not St. John Damascene's, and directly contradicts what he says. *De Fide l. 2. c. 4.*

† Hom. 86.

Capistran to lull the suspicion, so jealous are they in the Holy City, and even so perseveringly incredulous, where there is any appearance of swerving from the analogy of the faith. Indeed nothing can illustrate this better than the fact, that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are made by theologians to rank *after* the theological virtues, and find their place between those and the moral virtues.

II. *Analogy with the received opinion of doctors and the faithful.* This is of course a less certain criterion than the last; but it is a very safe one, which could not be overlooked without great rashness and imprudence. Anything supernatural adduced as evidence for some innovation in opinion and practice, would be regarded with great jealousy, and the authors of it be treated with harshness by their lawful superiors. Still it would not be necessarily false; instances in point may be found in the institution of the two Feasts of Corpus Christi and the Sacred Heart, and the sufferings of St. Juliana of Retinne and the Ven. Margaret Mary Alacoque, in consequence of the revelations made to them regarding those feasts. But when the supernatural fact is in analogy with the received opinion, it presents itself under auspices which are favourable just in proportion to the degree of certainty and reception which the opinion itself enjoys. Thus when Baronius in a dream saw our Lord refuse St. Philip Neri's request, and the Saint obtain it by turning to our Blessed Lady, this was in striking analogy with the common opin-

ion.\* Along with this may be classed in the way of contrast the account St. Francis Xavier gives us of a man who had kept something back in confession seeing himself led by the Infant Jesus to our Blessed Lady, who rejected him as having sins on his conscience sacrilegiously withheld in confession; the Saint having at the same time the same vision of the man's rejection represented to himself. The same may be said of the answer St. Stanislas Kostka received in prayer, that he should spend the ensuing Feast of the Assumption with our Blessed Lady in heaven; the late lamented bishop of the London district, Dr. Griffiths, expressed the same wish with touching earnestness shortly before his death; and in the same connexion we might quote the story of Father Diego Martinez, the Jesuit, being carried by the angels into heaven, to see with what splendour the feasts of our Blessed Lady were observed there. All this is in analogy with the common opinion of her assumption, and of the great feasts of the Church Militant, being in some way noted in the Church Triumphant. The vision in the Campidoglio at Rome, related by the great St. Peter Damian, in which it was revealed that our Blessed Lady took out of Purgatory every Feast of her Assumption, as many souls as there were inhabitants in

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\* We may quote here a passage of St. Antoninus. 4 pt. tit. 17. sec. 5. "The prayer of the Saints rests on nothing of their own, but only on the mercy of God. But the prayer of the Virgin rests on the grace of God by natural right, and on evangelical justice. For the Son is not only bound to honour His mother but to obey her, which is de jure naturæ."

Rome, is a similar instance. So St. Malachy's triple vision of his sister, related by St. Bernard, is used even by Bellarmine, as helping to prove a gradual diminution of the pains of purgatory. Thus many of the events of the life of the glorious St. Francesca Romana are equally in analogy with the commonly-received opinions about the holy angels and the demons. When Erasmus tells us that St. Francis appeared to him in a vision, and thanked him for rating those who set any value on being buried in the Franciscan habit, we join with Benedict XIV. in rejecting it either as a falsehood or delusion, because it fails when this test is applied to it. It came out in evidence before the Congregation that a certain holy Florentine woman had in her private prayers recommended herself to Jerome Savonarola. Benedict XIV., then promoter of the faith, maintained she had sinned, because, in spite of all the apologies made for him, it was acknowledged that he had been delivered to the secular arm, strangled, and burnt at Florence, and this after the judges, delegated by Alexander VI., had issued a process against him. The postulators in reply, besides throwing a doubt over Lambertini's facts, met the objection as one the force of which consisted in showing that the holy woman had acted contrary to the received opinion of the character of Savonarola. They maintained that his contemporaries had regarded him as a holy man, that he had died in the communion of Rome, after receiving the Sacraments

and taking the plenary indulgence at the hour of death, and that Suarez teaches that a person is to be excused from sin who pays private cultus to one of whose eternal salvation there is a strong probability.\* But their chief answer was that St. Philip Neri, already canonized, kept in a cupboard of his room a picture of Savonarola with rays round his head, and as Gallonio tells us, when the controversy arose about condemning Savonarola's works, St. Philip prayed that they might not be prohibited, and God revealed to him that they would not be so. The majority voted for the postulators, and Benedict XIII. imposing silence on any farther discussion of her prayers, ordered them to proceed with the cause of this holy woman, which Clement XII. confirmed.

*III. Dissimilitude to heresy or fanaticism.* This again is a criterion of inferior accuracy to either of the preceding ones; first, because of the very nature of heresy, which is a distorted caricature of the truth; and secondly, because of the well-known artifice of the devil, by which he strives to deceive the servants of God through crafty imitations of holy things and the disguises of angels of light, whereby if he should fail of deceiving, he may at least throw a slur over things which are really true. Thus the so-called suicide of St. Apollonia is agreed upon by all to have been a special movement of the Holy Ghost, notwithstanding its outward resem-

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\* See also Ferrais sub vocab. *Venerat. Sanctor.*

blance to the fanaticism of the Donatists and others. Still this criterion is of great value, although not unerring; and a man would be bound in prudence to stand back from anything which had even the look of heresy or fanaticism. It was by the application of this test that the wise St. Francis discovered the real character of the friar who was in the enjoyment of a great reputation for sanctity. The Saint was told by the monk's superior that his subject had a miraculous *attrait* for silence; but no sooner did the holy patriarch learn that the man carried it so far as to abstain from sacramental confession, than he discerned the delusion, and predicted the end of the wretched apostate. When causes of female servants of God are before the Congregation, inquiry is made whether they have made use even of their gifts gratis data only ad privatam doctrinam; the opposite conduct being an especial mark of heresy and fanaticism. St. Ignatius, as superior, used to give his fathers and brothers extremely long penances for very trivial faults; upon which a question is raised as to whether this is zeal for the spirit of observance, or simple imprudence. Indeed all the exemplifications of the two difficult virtues of zeal and anger in the Saints, especially the latter, have first of all to pass this test now under review. Thus St. Francis Xavier in a transport of zeal caused the house of one of his eastern neophytes to be burned down, because sacrifice had been offered to an idol in it. The same Saint having con-

ceived the design of going to China in order to gain that empire to Jesus Christ, his voyage was hindered by the government of Malacca. St. Francis did all he could to gain the governor, but gentleness having failed, he assumed his character as apostolical legate and laid the city under an interdict, ordered all the Jesuit fathers to leave the place, cursed those who had caused his journey to be stopped, and then shook the dust from off his feet at the gate of the city and left it. No sooner was he gone than the plague broke out; the governor, accused of sundry crimes at court, was arrested, sent to Portugal, and died of a broken heart in prison. When Adam Clarke shook the dust off his feet against the Cornish farmers, it was mainly the arrogance arising from lack of mission which distinguished his conduct from that of the great St. Francis. The patriarch St. Francis of Assisi, visiting the houses of his order in Tuscany, found that in one monastery the young friars spent too much time in philosophical disputes, which he judged contrary to the spirit of prayer and the religious life. He ordered the provincial to correct that; he promised to do so, but St. Francis, discovering afterwards that he had not fulfilled his promise, cursed him. The provincial fell ill, and sent to beg his superior's pardon; the Saint's answer was, "I have cursed him, and he shall be cursed," at which words a bolt fell from heaven, and killed the provincial on his bed. It is plain that such anecdotes as these may contain examples of he-

roic virtue, but from their outward resemblance to fanaticism a man would rigorously sift their authenticity, and that being established, he would require nothing short of the recognized holiness of a canonized Saint in order to render them approved.\*

*IV. Harmony with what is recorded of other Saints.* This is obviously a common sense criterion; it is the multiplication of witnesses in order to strengthen a case, and it is very observable that the evidence of hagiology is not only formidable from its mass, but from its singular coherence also. If we meet with anything startling in the Lives of holy men who have died in the odour of sanctity, and then find the same recorded of one, two, three, or more of the canonized Saints, reason tells us that if this be not actually enough to overrule our objection, it is enough to make us suspend our judgment. It breeds in us the same sort of feeling we have when we discover the similarity between the Old Testament miracles and those of our Sa-

\* It may be well to quote here the words of Father Surin about the anger of the Saints. Cat. Spir. ii. 249. "We ought to remark that these movements of indignation which come from God, and have God for their object, cause no trouble in the soul, but leave it as free and as tranquil as though it were in a movement of joy. We may say in general of anger, what we have already said of sadness and hatred, that when it is grace which forms them in the heart, they not only do not remove God from us, but unite us to Him, and dispose us to prayer, just as much as a heavenly consolation could do. The reason is, that it is not self-interest which touches us, nor any satisfaction of our own, which affects the soul in these conjunctures, but the sole interest of God, whom alone we desire to please."

viour, and again the likeness of the apostles' and martyrs' miracles to His. It is the same thing in kind, though of course infinitely lower in degree. If, for example, a man reads in the Life of a poor frail nun that our Lady acted as porteress for her, in order that her flight from the convent might not be discovered till she came back in penitence, such an extremely startling anecdote\* gets at least a kind of indirect respectability from the fact solemnly recorded in the Breviary lections for the feast of St. Felix of Valois, viz. that, the rest of the monks oversleeping themselves, our Blessed Lady came down into the church to St. Felix, dressed in the habit of his order, and assuming the post of cantor, she, the Saint, and some angels sang the divine office alternately, and that St. Felix satisfied his obligation by this unearthly choir. Again: if a man reads that our Blessed Lord has vouchsafed to put the Wound of His Side to the mouth of some holy uncanonized nun, and allowed her to drink therefrom a "spiritual nectar," he cannot quite so immediately dismiss the matter when he finds the same favour claimed for the canonized Rose of Lima, and, in an instance so famous as to be classical, for St. Catherine of Sienna. Again: if a reader is shocked in the Life of Rosa Maria Serio, the Carmelitess, by learning how St. John the Evangelist took her heart out of her side, and

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\* Quoted by Scaramelli (from Theoph. Raymund. Mirac. I. 7. c. 35.) in the Direttorio Ascetico. T. 1. art. XI. c. VI.

how our Lady squeezing some drops of black blood out of it, applied it to the Heart of Jesus, and it was then replaced filled with the fire of divine love, he will find the recorded experience of St. Bridget, St. Gertrude and St. Lidwine stand very much in the way of anything like an off-hand rejection of the story, especially with the well-known case of the Holy Ghost entering the heart of St. Philip Neri as a ball of fire, breaking his ribs, and causing a miracle of many years' duration in order to keep the Saint in life and action. Thus also the Bollandists make classifications of Saints, from certain miraculous qualities which have been common to a great number of them; as in the case of the Elæophori,\* or "ointment-dropping" Saints. Thus if any one felt a difficulty about believing that miraculous and healing oil flowed from the remains of St. Walburga, the difficulty of rejecting it would be not a little increased by finding the same property claimed for St. Andrew the Apostle, St. Matthew the Evangelist, St. Lawrence the Martyr, St. John the Merciful, St. Demetrius of Thessalonica, St. Nicolas of Myra, St. Catherine, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, St. Euphemia of Byzantium, and the Tuscan St. Agnes. Thus also some might be offended at St. Philip Neri's contemptuous way of casting out devils, sending others to do it, with light words, and so forth; but they might think the Saint had some meaning in it, when

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\* Life of St. Richard the Saxon, pp. 95, 97. Toovey's Collection.

they found the great St. Francis Xavier doing the same, sending little boys to hang his cross round the neck of the possessed, or to speak scornful words. Then again, some Saints seem to have been raised up by God as counterparts of other Saints; St. Rose of Lima, for example, stands in that relation to St. Catherine of Sienna. In like manner, when we read of St. Francesco di Paola, that he knew he should be canonized, it seems difficult to conceive how such a foreknowledge as this should not interfere with the liberty of his actions, or at least make some of his voluntary humiliations look insincere and merely dramatic; yet the probability of such a revelation is much increased when we read that it was also granted to St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Philip Neri, and St. Andrew Avellino. Any one who stumbles at being told that St. Anthony of Padua was a Saint from his childhood, will be more inclined to believe it when he hears the same of St. Nicholas of Tolentino, St. Felix of Valois, St. Rose of Lima, and the Blessed Columba of Rieti. If it seems unlikely that our Blessed Lady should have personally assisted at the death-bed of St. Clare from the very singularity of such a privilege, we naturally think more of it when the same is recorded of St. Felix of Cantalice, St. Clare of Montefalco, St. Theresa, St. Peter of Alcantara, St. John of God, and as it would seem from a previous anecdote, St. Andrew Avellino. The same may be said of the Saints who exercised dominion

over the elements and inanimate nature, as St. Peter Igneus, St. Chunegunde, Tiburtius, who suffered in the Diocletian persecution, St. Francis of Paul, St. Peter of Alcantara, St. Louis Bertrand, St. John of God, and those mentioned by St. Gregory the Great\* over fire, others over the production of fountains, others over trees and flowers, and the like. Familiar intercourse with spirits, splendour flowing from the face, the being raised into the air at prayer, and multiplying provisions, are almost universal in all Saints and holy persons who have had the gift of miracles at all; so that we must admit them at once simply on the principles of human evidence. The same may almost be said of miraculous passages over rivers and arms of the sea, such as were those, among many others, of St. Maurus, St. Beno, St. Peter of Alcantara, St. Hyacinth, and St. Francis of Paul. If any person were offended by an instance of it in one neither canonized nor even beatified, he would proceed warily when he found that the sixth lection in the Roman Breviary for the feast of St. Raymond of Pennafort contained the account of his sailing one hundred and sixty miles in six hours upon his cloak from Majorca to Barcellona, and then entering his convent through closed doors. It is true that the Church does not guarantee the Breviary from the possibility of historical error; but what shall we say of this same marvellous voyage being the subject of

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\* Lib. I. dial. 6.

the collect for the day, and put into our mouths as a solemn address to the Almighty? No one accustomed to the study of history will ever dream of neglecting this criterion of parallel cases.

V. *Corroboration in the Lives of Saints, who spent their days in practical activity and outward philanthropy in the world, for strange events or actions in the Lives of mystical and cloistered Saints.* This also is a criterion of no slight importance; for it is in the Lives of innocent cloistered souls, and mystics who lived in retirement hardly of the world,\* as Addolorate or Extatiche, that we who live in the world and know union with God only by name, or at most by puny endeavour, and not in its glorious realities, find most matter for surprise and occasionally (alas, for ourselves that it should be so!) for offence; and doubtless the poverty of human language, and the scarcely culpable misapprehension of the biographer, may sometimes cause things to be put before us in a manner most unfavourable to their reception. But the Saints who have been men of outward toil and apostolic discretion, to whom the ways and customs of the world have been familiar, and who have sanctified themselves among them, already command our respect, as indeed they do the respect even of heretics and aliens. If then we find

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\* How many travellers, clerical and lay, Protestant as well as Catholic, have verified, and more than verified, what was considered so extravagant in Lord Shrewsbury's relation when first published!

any particular favour or action in a mystical Saint paralleled in St. Philip Neri, or St. Ignatius, St. Pius V. or St. Charles, St. Vincent of Paul, or St. Francis of Sales, St. Alphonso Liguori, or St. Thomas of Villanova, St. Francis Borgia, or St. Francis Xavier, the matter is very much altered: a host of preliminary objections are disposed of, and the case gets all it wants, a fair hearing on its own evidence. This must recommend itself to every one. If we take objection to the wonders which accompany the mass of some holy mystic, we are less captious when we find the same in the mass of St. Philip Neri, the cheerful companion of cardinals and courtiers, or in the eight, ten, or twelve hours' mass of the Blessed Lawrence of Brindisi, who traversed Europe as the plenipotentiary of popes and kings, and got through as much business as any three stout and diligent prime ministers who were not hard-working Capuchins. If we are startled at wonderful accounts of bilocation in monks and nuns uncanonized, we are comforted in reading of the equally wonderful accounts of bilocation in the energetic missioner St. Francis Jerome, who could preach in one city while he was distributing alms in another, or in the discreet, sagacious Xavier, who could spend three whole days in two different places, busily engaged in both. If we are offended by some good simple-hearted nun among the austere Turchine having too great and childish a devotion for relics to be becoming in a Saint, we shall hardly judge her with such positiveness

when we have taken a good look at St. Philip Neri dancing before the bodies of the martyrs, Papias and Maurus, or the perverse enjoyment which the great St. Charles Borromeo took in endlessly translating relics processionally from church to church, and which was apparently the *deliciae* of the good and wise and prudent prelate. If our Protestant friends may have almost persuaded us to smile at St. Anthony's conflicts with the devils in the deserts of Egypt, we must perforce think rather more of it when we find amid the enlightenment and easy means of detection in modern times St. Francis Xavier praying before a devout picture of our Blessed Lady, the devils filling the church with angry howlings, striving in vain to frighten the Saint by horrid apparitions, and at last falling foul of him in good earnest, and beating him severely, till he is obliged to call on the Queen of Heaven, at whose potent name the baffled demons fly, and the Saint is forced to keep his bed for two days from the wounds and bruises he had received. And lastly, how differently must we look upon the claims of holy persons to have received the Stigmata, since the Church has granted mass and office of permission in honour of the Stigmata of St. Catherine of Sienna, and of precept in honour of those of St. Francis of Assisi.

VI. *A consideration of the date of the Saint, of the character of his biographer, and of the authority of the imprimatur attached to the Life.* There are very numerous cases in which this

criterion, though seemingly of low authority, will be found most useful. The accidents of date and birth-place, although they cannot affect the general supernatural character of a narrative in the way of despoiling it of its credibility, will often prove explanatory, and contribute probability or improbability to particular questions. This will apply especially to the biographies of holy men who lived under the Avignon popes, and to the shape in which things appear that at the time were pious opinions, but have since been defined, and to anecdotes involving matters of discipline previous to the Council of Trent. The character of the biographer must also of necessity enter as an ingredient in the deliberation, his means of information, his prejudices, his *esprit de corps*, the general evidence which his work bears of his power of cautious historical criticism, and the like. Rosignoli, for example, would not be a biographer of great weight. On this account, as has been said before, formal Lives drawn up later on and in connexion with the processes, are in most cases preferable to narratives composed on the spot, immediately after the Saint's death, and in the effervescence of popular devotion. But in the case of mystical Saints, the Lives drawn up by the Saints' contemporaries, and especially their confessors, would be much more to be selected. Hence the value of the Blessed Raymund of Capua's Life of St. Catherine of Sienna, of F. Sebastiano degli Angeli's Life of the Blessed Colomba of Rieti, and of Fra. Quinta Bevegnati's Life of St.

Margaret of Cortona. The auto-biographies of such Saints, e. g. the Life of St. Theresa and the beautiful Insinuations of St. Gertrude, hold a sort of middle place between history and theology, and are rather spiritual treatises of ascetical and mystical divinity than mere biographies. Giussano's Life of St. Charles Borromeo, written from personal observation and only seventeen years after his death, is a striking exception to this general rule, the reasons of which are readily to be found in the peculiar character of St. Charles himself, and the sort of influence he had over those about him. The great value of Lives drawn from the processes may be seen from what Benedict XIV. tells us, viz., that such a Life (*si processibus inniteretur*) may be adduced in the Congregation in proof of the fama sanctitatis; whereas Prosper Bottinius, when he was promoter of the faith, maintained in the cause of John of Ribera, that a modern life not drawn from the processes is inadmissible as evidence, and he proved his point from the decrees of Urban VIII. Thus F. Cepari's Life of St. Aloysius was examined by some cardinals, compared by them with the processes, and then approved by the pope; so that it is of very high authority indeed as a biography. Some Lives written by relations and intimate friends have occasionally been allowed of in the Congregation, and ratio had of them in the proceedings; this was the case with the Lives of St. Lawrence Justinian and St. Francis of Sales, written by their respective nephews. Peculiar

attention was paid to the depositions of confessors in the causes of St. Louis of France, St. Homobonus, St. Peter Martyr, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Catherine of Sienna, and St. Francesca Romana; and Bevegnati's Life of St. Margaret of Cortona, quoted above, was of great moment in her cause. An objection is sometimes made to accounts of miracles or celestial favours which could not be known except by the Saint's own disclosure; but the reader need not allow himself to be shaken by this. If he examines the rigid minuteness of the search after notes of vain-glory instituted in the Congregation, he may acquiesce in this alternative, that the servant of God has mentioned it either under obedience or else for the greater glory of God, as St. Paul mentioned things to his own credit, and Abbot John in Cassian, and St. Ignatius, and Venerable Bellarmine. If the servant of God has been either canonized or beatified, we durst hardly suppose them guilty of falsehood in such a subject-matter as supernatural favours from Almighty God. Taulerus even condemns the affixing of arms and inscriptions on buildings; Nicolaus Alemannius *de Lateranensis parietinis* takes a milder view; yet the eye of criticism fell upon the arms of Pius V. on a corner of the palace of the Holy Inquisition, and Card. Lambertini is at the pains of defending it. It is plain also that the Imprimatur is of *some* authority, whosesoever it may be; and in the case of a series composed of volumes each of which has two or three or four Imprimaturs they form a

cumulative pressure upon our inclination to believe or reject, which is by no means despicable. Perhaps at some periods in the Church the Imprimatur of the Sorbonne has been known to have been most rigid and scrupulous, and so during those periods it carries all the more weight with it. The character of particular religious orders at times imparts a value to the Imprimatur of their theologians, especially when such orders have been distinguished through a long course of years for sound, solid, and discerning erudition, as was especially the case with the Augustinians and Dominicans. On the value of the *Roman* Imprimatur we cannot do better than quote the remarks of Gaume:<sup>\*</sup> "There is a great difference between the Roman censors and those of other places. If it happens that a diocesan censor approves and gives his Imprimatur to a bad work, it is undoubtedly a great misfortune, but the evil is in some sort a private one. The Roman censors, it must not be forgotten, are the agents of the sovereign pontiff, named by himself, or by his immediate representative, and we may say that the pope is himself, as it were, the guarantee of their censures. If then a Roman censor should approve, and particularly if he should eulogize a work which contained one word contrary to what Rome teaches or permits to be taught, it would be a great evil for the whole Catholic world, and the pope would be obliged in condemning the censor to publish his

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\* *Man des Confess.* pref. p. xii. aliund citat.

mistake, in order to arrest the consequences of it. We must conclude then that it would be *at the least* very imprudent to blame a theological work approved, and particularly if praised, at Rome by the competent authorities." As an instance we may quote Pollidori's Life of St. Dominic, as *praised* in the Roman Imprimatur.

VII. *An inquiry as to how far the Church has committed herself in the matter.* This criterion is one of immense importance, and involves a great many questions of a theological nature. These it will be necessary to go into, even at the risk of being wearisome. First, then, it will be agreed on all hands, that no amount of sanction by the Church of God, even the very least degree which she ever accords, is a light or mean thing in the eyes and on the consciences of her children; she gives a dignity to whatsoever she touches. At the same time, if she has degrees of approval, and observes rules in the apportioning of those degrees, it is manifestly the duty of her children not to confound them one with another in an indiscreet and undiscerning way. On the one hand a man whose language implies that he has no respect except for what is *de fide*, and that he will submit to nothing else, is not only an ignorant man, but a very presumptuous one; he is as deficient in humility as he is in scholarship. On the other hand a man, who in the impetuosity of partisanship and the precipitate advocacy of favourite opinions, wilfully or negligently confounds the different degrees of the Church's approval, puts a falsehood into her mouth, and runs

the risk of driving others to the very edge of formal heresy. The test of all scholarship is moderation, and the special test of Catholic scholarship is humility besides. Now it is plain that in the subject under discussion the authority of the Church is of very great importance; all will admit that the infallibility of the Church, to speak metaphorically, radiates light and probability far beyond its own actual sphere, far beyond the points on which the weight of the infallible judgment directly falls. It is of importance to know how far it penetrates, and in what directions, of what particular value other and inferior judgments of the Church are, to what extent they bind, what they imply, how much collateral matter they embrace, and to what extent we may draw deductions from them, or flatter ourselves that at least the shadow of the sanction falls on those deductions. The greater value a man sets on religious truth, the more importance he attaches to all these questions, and the more simple he is in his way of dealing with them.

This opens the way to the following questions, the answers to which will complete what we have got to say, and discharge our obligation to our readers. 1. In speaking of beatification and canonization, What precisely is meant by the word *Church*, "the Church sanctions," "the Church pronounces," and the like? 2. What is the exact meaning of a thing being de fide, and if it is not de fide, is it necessarily only of human faith? 3. What is meant by

a servant of God being called *Venerable*, and by the decree that he has practised virtue in an heroic degree, and what authority attaches to it? 4. Is the decree of beatification a judgment, and if so, what sort of a judgment, and how does it differ from canonization? 5. Is the Church infallible in the canonization of Saints? 6. Is it de fide that the Church is infallible in the decree of canonization? 7. Is it de fide that the canonized Saint is really a Saint? In answering these questions we shall follow chiefly the doctrine of St. Thomas, Melchior Canus, Bellarmine, and Benedict XIV.; and we must premise that we shall speak throughout of the whole matter of beatification and canonization as it has been since the power was resumed from individual bishops to the Holy See; because antiquarian difficulties and moot points of history are quite irrelevant to our simple purpose. The reader should however be reminded, that when he reads or hears of Saints having been expunged from the calendar, the remark merely applies to local canonizations of bishops or popular devotion disallowed of by the Holy See; in no case to the canonizations of the popes, which would be impossible. Indeed the decrees of Urban VIII. about the *via non cultus* and the *via casus excepti* show the jealous care of the Holy See in this respect.

1. First, then, in speaking of beatification and canonization, What precisely is meant by the word *Church*? We answer—the permission or judgment, as the case may be, contained in the

decrees of the sovereign pontiff, whether declaratory of the exercise of virtue in an heroic degree, or beatifying, or definitively canonizing the Servants of God. Thus "the Church sanctions," would mean that the decree sanctions, or the pope sanctions, just as we say the Church says, for the Breviary says, i. e. the Church *in* the decree, *in* the Breviary; this, which is a usual and unobjectionable way of speaking, is actually necessary in order to avoid long descriptive circumlocutions at every turn. And let it be observed, that in reality there can be no controversy here, because if a member of a particular school of theology or from peculiar views of his own, were to deny that the infallible decree of canonization became infallible before it had been accepted by the universal Church, we should reply that dispute was unnecessary, because as a matter of fact all decrees of canonization have been, not tacitly only, but *cum strepitu*, received by the universal Church, and the mass and office of the Saint accepted and promulgated by the whole Catholic episcopate; so that on their own view we should be *substantially* right, though guilty of a little anachronism, in calling these decrees of the sovereign pontiff permissions and judgments of the Church from the very outset, from the moment of the Holy Father's solemn publication of them in the Vatican basilica. So when we use the word *Church*, we take the decisions come to in the causes of the Saints as in good truth her decisions; or in theological language, by the

word *Church* in this subject-matter we mean the Church *representative et docens* in contradistinction to the Church *credens*.

2. What is the exact meaning of a thing being *de fide*, and if it is not *de fide*, is it necessarily only of human faith? A thing is *de fide* because of the truth of God revealing it. Consequently dogmas are defined by the Church as *de fide*, not *precisely* because she is infallible about them, but because they are *aliunde revelata*. It does not therefore follow that the Church is not infallible about things not explicitly revealed, especially when they affect the salvation of the faithful. Canus\* held that the Church was not infallible in the approval of religious orders; but his opinion is almost unanimously rejected by theologians. Thus the Church is infallible upon dogmatic facts, in her precept of holydays of obligation and of hearing mass, in her judgment of lay-communion in one kind, the refusal of the Eucharist to infants, the condemnation of simoniacal and usurious contracts, and the like; because faith, morals, and general discipline are laid down in theology as the three great provinces of her infallibility. Yet her decisions, although certainly infallible, are not necessarily *de fide* on such points, inasmuch as they are not explicitly revealed; simply because a thing is *de fide*, not propter infallibilitatem ecclesiæ definitis, but propter veritatem Dei eam revealantis. This is the common teaching. Now a

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\* I. 5. c. 5.

man might say, It is not revealed that such and such a canonized Saint really enjoys the beatific vision; therefore it cannot be de fide that he is truly a Saint. What would follow from this? Are we then able at once to refer such a matter to ordinary human faith, with all the liability to error under which mere human faith labours? Certainly not; and this is a question of some importance. An opponent has not so completely got rid of his difficulties, when he has extorted an acknowledgment that this or that is not de fide. Theologians reply that there are three kinds of faith, *human*, which rests on human authority, and as such is uncertain and obnoxious to error; *divine*, which rests on divine authority, and is infallible immediately and of itself; and *ecclesiastical* faith, which rests on the authority of the Church defining anything with the special assistance of the Holy Ghost, through which she is preserved from the possibility of error; and this faith is infallible with a participated and borrowed infallibility, inferior in degree to divine faith, but with a certitude raising it far above human faith. If therefore anything be shown to be de fide ecclesiastica it is not only entitled to our acceptance, but it even overrules all opposition, as a man, though not formally a heretic, would, to use the common phrases, be rash, scandalous, and impious, if he asserted the contrary; and inquiry would show that an immense proportion of what is involved in hagiology is at least and most certainly de fide ecclesiastica.

3. What is meant by a servant of God being called Venerable, and by the decree that he has practised virtue in an heroic degree, and what authority attaches to it? The title of *venerabilis* imports that the *fame* of a man's sanctity has been judicially proved; strictly speaking, according to the custom of the Congregation of Rites, they are styled Venerable in whose causes the commission of introduction has been signed. This *probatio famæ*, as it is called, is effected by witnesses, by historical documents, and by votive offerings and tablets hung up at the tomb of the servant of God, and the custom of the Congregation requires six or eight witnesses; as has been said before, a newly published Life not drawn from the processes cannot be adduced among the documents, but an ancient one, or by an author of approved authority, may be admitted. The commission of introduction is signed by the pope, and addressed to the Congregation. Sometimes in one brief he gives the faculty for proceeding both in genere and in specie; this was done in the cause of St. Philip Neri; sometimes the two faculties are granted in two separate briefs; this was done in the cause of St. Theresa. The signing of the commission does not legitimate the beginning of any cultus, but enables remissorial and compulsorial letters to be uttered in order to the formation of the *apostolical* processes, and by it the Holy See takes the whole matter under its own jurisdiction, and the local bishops and ordinaries can no longer interfere. In 1629 the Congrega-

tion of the Holy Inquisition punished the Clerks Regulars with great severity for having shown public cultus to St. Francis Caracciolo at Naples, before he was canonized ; and 1648 the Fathers of the Sick were visited with a like infliction for a similar offence with regard to St. Camillus of Lellis. The resolution of the question, whether it is plain that the servant of God has practised virtue in an heroic degree, precedes the discussion of his miracles. The custom of the Congregation is to discuss the dubium de virtutibus theologicis at one time, and the dubium de virtutibus cardinalibus at another, as was done in the case of St. Francis of Sales ; but a dispensation from this was procured and acted upon in the causes of the Blessed Ippolito Galantini, St. Francis Solano, Cardinal Bellarmine, Cardinal Ximenes, and others. It is during this discussion that all singular and unwonted actions of the servants of God, and all deeds seemingly opposed to the divine or natural law, are subjected to the rigorous examination already described, to see whether they may be safely referred to a special instinct of the Holy Ghost, according to the tests supplied by Cardinal Bona, Castellinus, Ven. Louis da Ponte, and others; neither is it lawful to proceed to the discussion of the miracles till the question of the virtues has been settled. The style of the decree is as follows : The relator of the cause propounds the doubt in the presence of the pope ; the pope hears the votes of the cardinals and consultors in favour of the decree, but his Holiness, decreeing no-

thing at the time, flies in prayer to the Giver of all virtues, beseeching Him to make known the Sacrament of His Will; then on a subsequent day he sanctions the decree infallibili suæ vocis oraculo *in casu et ad effectum de quo agitur*. Thus the title of Venerable puts the *fame* of a man's sanctity beyond mere hearsay of local rumour, and draws the eyes of Catholics very markedly upon him. The decree of the heroicity of his virtue certifies us that his extraordinary actions have passed the difficult and intricate ordeal of the Congregation, and so far as the virtues are concerned gives us a sentence as much more certain than the decision of the best law-court in the world, as the process is more severe, the tests more sure, and the authority of the judges more weighty; and this is only what sceptical lawyers have themselves admitted.

4. Is the decree of beatification\* a judgment, and if so, what sort of a judgment, and how does it differ from canonization? We must distinguish. There are two kinds of beatification; first, *formal*, in which, the virtues and miracles of the servant of God being proved, the sovereign pontiff allows him to be called by the title of "beatus," and grants mass and office in his honour (this is not always done in the decree),

\* For the doctrine of the following paragraphs see St. Thomas, Canus, Benedict XIV., Suarez, Bellarmine, Billuart, Bouvier, St. Alphonso, and Ferraris: it is useless to make separate reference, as their doctrine is found within a small compass under its proper head in their respective works.

though generally with some local restriction ; the second is called *æquipollent*, and that is, when the pope allows the ancient fame of a servant of God, and confirms the local sentence of the ordinary or delegate approving the cultus paid to him. In the case of *æquipollent* beatification it is more a concession than a judgment, because it proceeds rather on extrajudicial grounds ; in the case of formal beatification it is rather a judgment than a concession, although as a judgment it is neither definitive nor final. Secondly, in the case of *æquipollent* beatification it is *most probable* that the decision is not infallible, both because of its proceeding in an extrajudicial way, and because the popes in their confirmatory letters generally insert a clause reserving the right of the Congregation, and thus making the sentence revocable. In the case of formal beatification the decision is *probably* infallible, because it has proceeded in a judicial way upon the examination of the virtues and miracles, because it is a solemn approbation of cultus, because it is intimately connected with morals, and grave inconveniences would result from the possibility of error, and because the mass of the *beatus* is granted ; although Benedict XIV. shows that for this last a moral certainty of the beatitude would be sufficient. At the same time it is by no means certain that it is infallible ; the probability against its being so seems to some nearly equal to the probability that it is, because the judgment is not absolute and definitive, because it is not directed to the universal Church, and

because no precept is uttered in the matter, but rather a concession made, or if a precept is uttered, it is to a restricted locality. Thus a man who should maintain that a beatification was erroneous and a cultus approbatus wrong, would not be guilty of heresy, but of scandal and temerity. 3. Canonization and beatification differ in these respects; the first is an ultimate and definitive sentence, the second only preparatory and directed towards a future one; the first is a judgment strictly and properly so called, the second partakes very much of the nature of a concession; the first is directed to the universal Church, the second to a particular province, diocese, city, or religious order, and can never be more than *permissive* to the universal Church. Beatification therefore may be defined to be a preparatory act, importing a cultus permissus, mostly limited to a particular place: whereas canonization is an ultimate act, importing a cultus præceptus, extending to the whole Church. In decrees of beatification the style of the sovereign pontiffs is, *Indulgemus, Concedimus*; in the decrees of canonization, *Definimus, Decernimus, Mandamus*.

Mention ought to be made here of the controversy among Catholic doctors, whether the difference between canonization and beatification is essential or only accidental. Valentia, Tannerus, Henno, Aniaga, Viva, and Diana on the one side maintain, that in beatification the pope is infallible only with a moral infallibility, *infra fidem*, because beatification differs essen-

tially from canonization, so that he who denies the glory of a beatus is not a formal heretic, but simply "rash, scandalous, impious, and savouring of heresy."\* The grounds of this opinion are, first, that beatification is not the ultimate judgment of the Church, as canonization is; and, secondly, that the pope's style, *concedimus, indulgemus, impartimur*, as contrasted with his style in canonization, proves this. Then on the other hand, Leytan, Verricelli, Castropalao, Matthæucci, Felix Potestas, Bordonus, and others, maintain that the difference between beatification and canonization is merely accidental; for, first, beatification is proceeded to in the same way as canonization, i. e. with the invocation of the Holy Ghost; secondly, at least an implicit judgment is given that the beatus is in the enjoyment of the beatific vision; thirdly, the same

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\* A man desirous of signalizing himself by novelty of teaching in the Church without actually incurring the awkward consequences of formal heresy, may find, if he has a tolerably hardened conscience, ample scope in the extensive field of censurable matter, without running foul of one titillate that is de fide; for he may incur twenty-three different censures, and yet steer clear of formal heresy; his doctrines may be savouring of heresy, suspected of heresy, close upon heresy, schismatical, Jewish, pagan, atheistical, blasphemous, impious, erroneous, close upon error, savouring or suspected of error, scandalous, temerarious, seditious, ill-sounding, offensive to pious ears, lax, likely to seduce the simple, insane, fabulous and lying, apocryphal, improbable, and antiquated! Propositions of this last kind are defined to be such as were anciently admitted to be probable, because no certain principle opposed to them was recognized, but which now, although not expressly condemned, find themselves incompatible with a later decree of the Roman chair. Thus we find ourselves at the end of censures where we were started in the principles of theology—at the Cathedra Romana. See Ferraris sub Propp. Damnat. 21—45.

inconveniences to the holiness of the Church would result from the fallibility of a decree of beatification as from that of a decree of canonization; and, fourthly, the honours paid to a beatus are precisely those which Bellarmine says are *essential* to the cultus of a Saint. To the first objection they reply, that the judgment in beatification is ultimate as far as it goes, because there is no new examination for canonization either of the virtues of the servant of God, or of the miracles he wrought in his lifetime, or of the miracles wrought between his death and beatification, but only of the *continuation* of miracles since his beatification: to the second objection they reply, that as well by the style of beatification as of canonization the pope declares the servant of God to be in glory. Hence they conclude with Pignatelli, that the former doctrine "is not from the apostolic See, and therefore cannot stand," and with Conterolus, that "beatification is in effect nothing else but a certain particular canonization celebrated with less pomp," and that, as Ferraris sums up, by the acts of beatification and canonization the faithful are certified that the soul of the beatified or canonized servant of God is in glory, with this difference, that in canonization they believe it as by a form *expressly* definitive and pronunciative, in beatification by a form concessive and *implicitly* definitive. "Hence," says that eminent canonist, "the greater number of classical doctors hold it to be *of faith*, that the

pope cannot err, not only in canonization, but also in beatification."\*

5. Is the Church infallible in the canonization of Saints? We must say something by way of prefacing our answer to this question. Canonization is the public testimony of the Church to the true sanctity and glory of some one of the faithful departed. This testimony is issued in the form of a judgment decreeing to the person in question the honours due to those who are enjoying the beatific vision and reigning with God. By this decree he is inscribed in the catalogue of the Saints; he is invoked in the public prayers of the Church; churches are dedicated to God in memory of him, mass offered, the canonical hours recited, and his feasts kept; and, finally, his picture is allowed to be painted with rays and nimbus, denoting the glory that he has with God, and public honours are paid to his relics. This shows the folly of Protestant scholars in supposing that they have arrived at some conclusion or other against the Church, if they can show that the honour of relics, nimbus, and the like, are of pagan origin, imitations of heathen customs. The very little erudition required to dress up any section of Middleton's stale arguments renders it extremely tempting to incipient controversialists. But if these things were imitations of heathen customs, what of it? *Quid ad rem?*

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\* For some account of this controversy see Ferraris sub vocab. *Venerat. Sanctor.* n. n. 11—15 et sub *Papa* n. n. 53—57.

Christians are not obliged to have domestic manners and customs different from those of other men. If the Church of God chooses to take any assignable custom, and make it the subject of decrees, and lay people under censures and penalties who use it out of place or time, the question is one of intrinsic fitness or intrinsic truthfulness ; and the origin of the custom is simply one of sterile, however interesting, antiquarianism. Hence, how unmeaning is the cry of triumph raised, because a man discovers what possibly no moderately instructed Catholic ever doubted, that such or such a custom existed in the Roman republic and early empire before the establishment of the Church. How does this touch the real, theological, or intrinsic merit of the question ? We find that in cases of cultus immemorabilis the diadems, aureoles, splendours, and rays round the paintings of ancient Saints are investigated, and the question whether these ornaments are of the same date with the painting is jealously entertained, and artists sent from Rome to examine and report to the Congregation. We find also, and it gives us some notion how carefully these honours are separated and distributed, that on February 19, 1658, Alexander XII. decreed “beatorum capita radiolis, non diademate ornari debere.” Now if a Protestant, with the natural readiness of *his* educated instinct, turns to pagan times for proofs of rays and glories and nimbus, he is welcome ; meanwhile a Catholic, with the natural readiness of *his* educated instinct, turns, surely with equal

right, to Hebrew or to Christian times, and finds authority for his nimbus in the transfiguration of his Saviour, in the case of the protomartyr Stephen, and still farther back in the remarkable instance of Moses; and so at last the Catholic scholar has it in antiquity as well as in respectfulness for the customs of the Church of God.\*

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\* 18. etc. Antiquitatem cultus S. Gregorii desumunt Bollandiani ex eo, quod Anastasius VI. post 60 annos a Gregorii obitu in abside Sacelli S. Nicolai, a Callisto II. in urbe constructi, eundem cum aliorum sanctorum insignibus depingi jusserit. Hoc Sacellum in antiquo Lateranensi patriarchio, licet in Pænitentiariorum collegium commutato, adhuc remanet cum altari, in cuius abside pictura extat, representans in parte superiori imaginis B. Virginis filium in sinu gerentis, duorum angelorum circumstantium, Pontificum Callistii II., et Anastasii IV. necnon SS. Sylvestri et Anastasii. In parte vero inferiori imagines Crucifixi, SS. Dominici, et Francisci, ac SS. Pontificum Leonis III., Urbani II., Paschalii II., Gelasii II., Gregorii II., Alexandri II., Gregorii VII., et Victoriae III., hinc inde dispositas, et pontificalibus vestibus, mitra, ac diademato orbiculato, ac titulo *sanceti* ornatas. Olim aderat imago S. Nicolai Myrensis episcopi, et loco SS. Leonis III., et Gregorii II., erant imagines, SS. Leonis Magni, et Gregorii Magni, eodem modo ornatae, testibus Panvinio, Severano (de sep. urb. eccl.) aliisque. Ex hac itaque tabula initium cultus S. Gregorii VII. ad Anastasiū IV. referendum esse constat. In ea quippe Callistus II. sacelli ædificator, et Anastasius IV. instaurator apparent ad pedes B. Virginis proculi, ut in antiquis musivis ecclesiarum Urbis conspicuntur imagines Pontificum, qui dictas ecclesias ædificaverant, vel instauraverant, quorum exempla referunt Ciampinus (de ædif. a Const. constit. c. 4, tab. 23, et in veter. monim. to 2, cap. 13, tab. 28,) et alii. Eorum capita diadematè quadrato ornata sunt, sicuti viventes Pontifices pingi solebant, teste Turrigio (in not. ad hist. mart. S. Theod.) cum aliis. Aliorum vero Pontificum capita diadema circulatum ornat, sanctitatis, et cultus ecclesiastici argumentum, juxta interpres sacrae Scripturae et alios. Idem refert Turrigius cit. Hic Pontifex translato ejus corpore ab ecclesia Avenionensi ad monasterium S. Victoris Massiliensis, miraculis claruisse dicitur, ejusque canonizationem Waldemarus Danicæ rex a Gregorio XI. Carolus Galliarum, et Ludovicus Sicilicus reges a Clemente VII. pseudopontifice petierunt. Hic ad quosdam suæ obedientiæ præsules literas dedit ut processum super ejusdem

All the historical controversies regarding canonization, its essential difference from the superstitious apotheosis of the heathen, all questions regarding the local and episcopal canonizations before the Holy See reserved the matter to itself, when Alexander III.\* canonized our own King Edward, St. Bernard (in the bull of whose canonization no mention whatever is made of miracles) and St. Thomas of Canterbury, are irrelevant to our purpose, inasmuch as they do not apply to the cases we are contemplating, neither do they in any way involve the Church or her head. Our question is, Is the Church infallible in the canonization of Saints? Most certainly.

It is proved,

1. By the acceptance on the part of the whole Church of the solemn decrees of canonization which the popes have published for several centuries. If such decrees, or any of them were false, the universal Church would have approved error.

2. The opposite opinion would subvert all the

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*virtutibus, et miraculis conficerent, qua si cum aliis monumentis, et scriptoribus conjungantur, Urbani sanctitatem, et miracula plurimum commendant. Porro testatur Philippus Bonarrotius (in obser. ad fragm. ant. vas. vitr. tab. 9, fig. 1 et 2,) morem pingendi orbiculatam coronam circa angelorum capita cespisse initio saeculi V. receptum fuisse in fine VI. et post VII. ad sanctorum imagines fuisse productum. Bened. XIV. de canonizat. lib. 1. cap. XLI. S. X.*

\* There is a question about the first solemn canonization; some say it was Leo III.'s canonization of St. Swibert in 804; Mabillon and Papebroch decide in favour of the canonization of St. Udalric by John XV. in 993.

cultus of the Saints, because if it could be *once* admitted that the Church had erred in any particular instance, every body might doubt of the legitimacy of the cultus of any, even the most distinguished Saints.

3. The opposite opinion would expose the Church to the contempt and reviling of heretics, and of the demons, which would be contrary to the promises of Christ, and dishonourable to God.

4. The opposite opinion would destroy the note of sanctity in the Church, for it would admit that she *could* pay religious cultus to the damned, God's enemies and the companions of the devils.

5. The Church is infallible in the common doctrine of morals; the canonization of Saints pertains to the common doctrine of morals, and so falls under the infallibility of the Church.

6. The authority of St. Thomas,\* is in favour of this. In the passage cited he says that the canonization of Saints is something between things which pertain *ad fidem*, and things which pertain *ad facta*, and that the Church is infallible in such matter, because the honour we pay to the Saints is a kind of profession of faith, because the pope can only be certified of the state of any of the faithful departed by an instinct of the Holy Ghost, and because Divine Providence preserves the Church in such cases from being deceived by the fallible testimony of men.

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\* Quodlib. 9. 16.

7. Sixtus V., in the last consistory for the canonization of St. Didacus, spoke for an hour in assertion of the infallibility of the decrees of canonization, but it may be said that he was then speaking as a private doctor; yet even so, his opinion is of great weight.

8. Besides the Thomists, the Scotists also defend the pope's infallibility in the decrees of canonization; so that these two rival schools agree in this particular; and among moderns Bellarmine and Suarez may be mentioned as asserters of the same.

9. In canonizations by private bishops before the Holy See reserved it to itself errors have been discovered; but none has been discovered in all the very numerous decrees since that time.

10. The following very beautiful passage of Benedict XIV. will not be considered without its weight: \* "We ourselves, who for the space of so many years discharged the duties of promoter of the faith, have seen with our own eyes, as we may say, the Divine Spirit assisting the Roman Pontiff in defining the causes of canonization; for in some of them, which had advanced so far with a most prosperous course, sudden difficulties never known before have all at once started up, which retarded their hitherto fortunate career; whereas in others, on the contrary, difficulties, which seemed insuperable, have been removed and silenced with a strange facility from

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\* De can. i. 44. 4.

things which have unexpectedly come to light, and so the causes have attained their desired end."

The judgment of the Church therefore in the Canonization of Saints is infallible.

*Objections answered.* 1. "The church in the canonization of Saints rests on human testimony." Yes, yet not on human testimony alone, but also on the special assistance of Divine Providence.

2. "Many have been honoured as Saints who were not so." By particular churches, granted; by the Church universal, no: this explains the case of the robber in the Life of St. Martin, the man killed in a fit of drunkenness mentioned by Alexander III., and the reckoning of Eusebius of Cæsarea among the Saints in the Martyrologium Usuarde. The often-quoted words of St. Augustine, that many bodies are honoured on earth whose souls are tormented in hell, are first of all not his, and, secondly, have no necessary reference to the Saints, or to anything beyond *cultus civilis*.

3. "The Martyrologies are proposed to the whole Church." Yes, but not as proposing those whose names are contained in them to the *cultus* of the universal Church, but that men may know to whom *cultus* is paid in particular places.

4. "Many of the names of Saints have been struck out of the Roman Breviary."—The contents of the Roman Breviary are not proposed to the Church as defined, or as obliging the

faithful; for the historical facts which it contains, though they merit more than ordinary credence, may be subjected to a fresh examination, and may even be criticised by private scholars, provided it is done with moderation and respectfulness, and not without grave reason. The Holy See has itself made changes and corrections in the Breviary from time to time.

5. "The Church cannot judge infallibly of personal facts." Of personal facts considered in themselves she does not judge; but of personal facts which in any given case are essentially connected with the purity of doctrine and morals she can and does judge; and the facts on which the judgment of canonization is founded are such.

6. "There is no need to bring infallibility into this question; because the inconvenience of a person being revered as a Saint who is not one is more imaginary than real; for cultus is an act of practical virtue, namely religion, and requires therefore for its regulation a judgment practically, but not of necessity speculatively, true, just as there is no inconvenience in a Host, prudently supposed to be consecrated, but in reality not so, being adored." *Answer.* The practical judgment is sufficient for the individual in the case of any particular Saint, the speculatively true judgment of the church being presupposed; for, as has been shown, to suppose the Church possibly in error in this is to derogate both from her sanctity and honour. As to the unconsecrated Host, there is no parity be-

tween the two cases; first of all, the Church does not judge this or that Host in particular to be consecrated; and, secondly, Christ is adored under the species, so that supposing Him not present there, there still remains a true Object of adoration, i. e. Christ himself. Whereas if the reputed Saint be not a Saint, he is an object of execration, not of veneration. If it is objected that after all it is God who is honoured in the Saints—true, but the Saints themselves are also *specifically* honoured and invoked.

7. “There may be an error in relics exposed to public veneration without any such grave consequences being supposed to flow from the mistake: why will not the same hold in regard to Saints proposed to public veneration?” First, because the Church does not propose the particular relics as true; and, secondly, because the Saint is the direct object of cultus, relics are not; it is the Saint who is reverenced in and through them.

The judgment of the Church therefore in the canonization of Saints is infallible.

6. Is it de fide that the Church is infallible in the decree of canonization? This is an open question in the Catholic schools. They who maintain the negative argue as follows:

1. St. Thomas places the judgment of the Church in canonization as something between a judgment in matters of faith and a judgment on particular facts, and therefore it would follow that the infallibility of the decree is a pious

belief, but nothing more, inasmuch as it only pertains to the faith *reductivè*.

2. It is de fide that the Church is infallible in the common doctrine of morals; but it is not so certain that the canonization of Saints pertains to the common doctrine of morals.

3. The Church has never defined her infallibility in this matter to be de fide, neither can we collect it from her practice.

4. The great names of Suarez, Vasquez, Canus, Raynaudus and the doctors of Salamanca, are found on this side of the question.

They who maintain the affirmative argue as follows:

1. He is a heretic who asserts that the pope can err in making laws for the universal Church; now the canonization of a Saint is such a law; and as no one is a heretic who does not deny what is de fide, this must be de fide.

2. The Church can define as de fide a conclusion drawn from two premisses, one of which is of faith, and the other morally certain: now it is de fide that whosoever perseveres in virtue to the end will be saved, and it is morally certain from the processes that the Saints whom the Church has canonized persevered to the end. Ergo,

3. In scripture God delineates the qualities of those who shall be saved; therefore He implicitly reveals those who shall be saved: the supreme pontiff with the assistance of the Holy Spirit examines the virtues and miracles, and so pronounces the decree.

4. Bishop Bouvier adds to the arguments quoted by Benedict XIV. the following: We must pass the same judgment on this infallibility that we do on the infallibility regarding dogmatic facts. It seems of *divine* faith that the Church has the right of pronouncing infallibly in the canonizations of Saints; for the Church is infallible regarding precepts of morals, and canonization pertains obviously to precepts of morals. This last argument certainly seems to incline the balance of probability to the affirmative side of the question; and Benedict XIV. says, we know by the decrees of general councils, that it is of faith that the Saints and their relics are to be reverenced; we know that the sentence of canonization is definitive and infallible, and regards the universal Church; we know that the Council of Constance condemned Wickliffe for denying the beatitude of certain Saints, e. g. St. Augustine, St. Benedict, and St. Bernard; we know that in the bull of the canonization of St. Udalric by John XV. in the Lateran Council, excommunication is pronounced against those who oppose it, and excommunication seems the punishment proper to heresy,\* and all these things greatly favour the affirmative sentence.

It seems then *probable* that it is de fide that the judgment of the Church in canonization is infallible; but beyond this assertion of a strong probability we must not venture to go, especially

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\* Yet not to heresy exclusively, as it is sometimes inflicted for blasphemous, scandalous, or suspicious propositions, as is plain from the bull Unigenitus.

seeing such great names for the negative opinion. It is safer to conclude with the wise and learned Lambertini, that each opinion should be left in its own probability, until a judgment shall issue from the Holy See; for when we are treating of setting up a dogma of faith, says the same careful theologian in another place, we must wait for the judgment of the Apostolic See; the mother and mistress of the other Churches, and of the chief pontiff, to whom it exclusively belongs to make definitions of faith, before we venture to brand with the infamous note of heresy those who follow an opposite opinion.

We may however add so much as this. It would seem that the most tangible ground any one can have for saying that it is not *de fide* that the pope is infallible in canonization is this—that it is not beyond all controversy certain that the matter of canonization affects in any real or intimate way the morals of the universal Church. It is hard to see however how this can be maintained with anything like plausibility; the direct or indirect effects of canonization have been enumerated in another place, as well as the degree to which all ranks and parties in the Church are committed to it; so we need not repeat them here. But it may materially assist us in deciding this question, to consider the controversy about the infallibility of the pope in the approval of religious orders. Melchior Canus denied this infallibility, but the almost universal teaching of Catholic doctors is against him. Sessa, Diana, Leytan, Viva, Matthæucci, Barbosa, Valentia, Azorius, Bellarmine, and Bannes, are

all arrayed against him by Ferraris, and Benedict XIV. equally gives sentence against him, and speaks of his opinion as being generally rejected. The ground on which it is considered that the pope is infallible in the approbation of a religious order is, that the rule to be approved is a comment upon or interpretation of the evangelical counsels intimately affecting the morals of the Church. To this it is objected first of all, that religious orders are nowhere revealed by God, and therefore cannot be the subject-matter of the pope's infallibility ; and, secondly, that their existence is but contingent, as they can be suppressed, and in point of fact many have been so suppressed. To the first objection it is answered, that religious orders are not revealed as to their existence, but that they are so as to their lawfulness and sanctity indirectly in the principle that the Church is holy and has an infallible head ; to the second it is replied, that they are contingent as to their existence, not as to their lawfulness and sanctity. Thus every one must see that it is their connexion with the morals of the Church which brings them under the exercise of the pope's infallibility. For example, the question arises whether a man can lawfully give up his right to receive fraternal correction before his fault is laid before superiors. Sanchez at once decides that he can ; Philiarchus as positively declares that he cannot ; the theologians of Salamanca rule that a man may yield his right, but that another may not take the advantage of this concession. St. Alphonso sees his way to adopt the first opinion

by the following process:—the constitutions of the Jesuits distinctly assert the right to this renunciation, and it is one of their maxims of perfection; but Paul III. and Julius III. approved these constitutions, especially those that were most attacked and contradicted, and Gregory XIII. in the Bull *Ascendente Domino* excommunicated those who should any longer impugn them; now, says St. Alphonso, the Church cannot err in the approbation of religious orders, because such approbation has reference to the matter of morals; whereupon he declares that Philiarchus has incurred the charge of rashness and impiety for his attack upon the said constitutions. Here is a case where the practical effect of this approbation is seen at work, and a judgment of moral theology come to upon the strength of it. Yet surely canonization has far more numerous and more important bearings upon Catholic morals than the approval of a religious rule, and the existence of the cultus of a Saint *canonized by the Holy See* is not contingent as the existence of a rule is; and if it is decided by the general teaching in Catholic schools that the approval of a rule is intimately connected with morals, much more may we consider the connexion of canonization with morals as a fact about which no legitimate question can now be raised, the whole controversy about *Dogmatic Facts* having thrown a much stronger and clearer light upon matters of this sort.

7. Is it de fide that the canonized Saint is really a Saint? Those who maintain the negative side in the last question argue thus:—1.

If the infallibility of the Church in canonization is not *de fide*, *a fortiori* it is not *de fide* that each canonized Saint really enjoys the beatific vision : for, first, it is plainly not a matter of *immediate* revelation, and, secondly, if the Church's infallibility in this respect is not *de fide* itself, the glory of any particular Saint is not a matter of *mediate* revelation.

2. Nothing can be put by the Church among the dogmas of faith which is neither implicitly nor virtually revealed : now the sanctity of any one in particular is neither implicitly nor virtually revealed. This is denied by those who take the affirmative side, in their third argument quoted in the last question. Supposing however the present objection valid, it will, as its own partisans are careful to assert, by no means follow that cultus could be denied with impunity to any Saint, just as adoration could not be refused at the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, although it is not *de fide* that that particular Host is consecrated.

They who maintain the affirmative say—

1. That St. Thomas says that the honour we pay to the Saints is a kind of profession of faith with which we believe in the glory of the Saints ; but the faith wherewith we believe in the glory of the Saints is divine faith ; therefore the faith wherewith we honour a particular Saint is divine. This seems inconclusive, because the glory of the Saints *in general* is revealed, whereas according to the hypothesis of the opponent, the glory of the *particular* Saint is not revealed, so that as an answer to the last objection it is

a petitio principii. Supposing however the glory of a particular Saint to be implicitly revealed, as in affirmation 3 of the preceding question, then it seems valid in fact, but informal in statement.

2. That the assistance of the Holy Spirit is itself a revelation; but this seems untenable, else the fathers of the councils would become inspired writers and speakers, and their definitions the Word of God; for it is one thing to preserve a person from error when he speaks, and another thing to tell him what to say.

This question like the last, with which it is nearly identical, or at least involved in it, must remain in its uncertainty, until it has been defined. All we can do is to conclude practically with St. Bonaventure, that it would be a most incredible and most horrible thing to doubt of the true beatitude of any one whom the Church has canonized; with Melchior Canus, that a man who did so would be temerarious, impudent, and irreligious; with Benedict XIV. that he would be rash, give scandal to the Church, dishonour the Saints, favour the heretics who deny the authority of the church in canonization, and would himself savour of heresy, as preparing the way for infidels to deride the faithful; that that man would be an asserter of an erroneous opinion, and obnoxious to the heaviest penalties, who should dare to affirm that the sovereign pontiff had erred in this or that canonization, or that this or that Saint canonized by him was not to be reverenced with the cultus duliae; and, finally, with the Dominican Billuart, that

whosoever should deny that any one canonized by the Church was a Saint and in glory would not certainly be a formal heretic, but would be, first, temerarious, because he would contradict the common opinion of the Church in a matter excellently well founded, and whose opposite has no adequate foundation ; it is the most insolent madness, says St. Augustine, to dispute whether that ought to be done which the whole Church does ; secondly, scandalous, as drawing the faithful away from the cultus of the Saints ; thirdly, impious, as insulting and dishonouring the Church and her Saints ; and, fourthly, he would savour of the heresy of the sectaries who deride the canonizations of the Church, and deny the cultus and invocation of Saints. Still let us remember, for the very possibilities of charity are dear to a disciple of the Cross, the words with which Pritanius closes a similarly severe conclusion : *Suspicionem hæresis memoravi, non autem hæresim formalem.\**

These then are the tests which we venture to propose, in order to render the study of the Lives of the Saints, even the most mystical and supernatural, safe as well as edifying. These are the points on which the reader should keep his eye steadily fixed, not with monotonous gaze, but with a glance which can fall easily and at once on the point which happens to be most to his purpose :—1. Analogy with the faith ; 2. analogy with the received opinion of doctors and

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\* St. Bonaven. ap. Catharinum li. and Raynaud in corona aurea R. P. p. 153, Canus. I. 5. p. 166. Scaech. de not et sig. Sect. 1. Cap. 8. Pritan. de ingen moderat. lib. I. c. 17. ap. Bened. i. 45.

the faithful; 3. dissimilitude to heresy and fanaticism; 4. harmony with what is recorded of other Saints; 5. corroborations in the Lives of Saints who spent their days in practical activity and outward philanthropy in the world, for strange events in the lives of mystical and cloistered Saints; 6. a consideration of the date of the Saint, of the character of his biographer, and of the authority of the imprimatur attached to the Life; 7. an inquiry as to how far the Church has committed herself in the matter. The claim of anything to be received in spite of *prima facie* objections will vary in force according as one or two or more of these tests may be found to tell in its favour; and the force will vary farther according to the importance of the tests which concur in behalf of the claim, and their value will perhaps be found to be proportioned to the order in which we have placed them. Besides this, the tests will not only enable a man to get over *prima facie* difficulties, but will enable him to discern what amount of credibility or authority he is to give to any point in question, and where it will be unsafe for him to proceed farther, either as leading him to tamper with the analogy of faith, or to trespass beyond the limits of a sober criticism. *In most matters it is safer to believe too much than too little; in hagiology it is safer to believe too little than too much.* This is not said off hand, and may be valuable as a rule.

It may be asked, If these seven tests are classed in the proper order of their importance, how comes it that the authority of the Church

is mentioned last? Because, although its importance on the general bearing of the question is immense, its influence upon particular facts is much below this. It does not lay an actual hold of particular instances, as the first five tests do, and though much more weighty in itself, it does not come so near to single cases as the sixth test, which approaches them, though it cannot be said to touch each case in particular, so as to give a distinct authority to it. Putting aside, out of humility and as unfit for argument, as well the miracles quoted in the decrees, as the remarkable actions occasionally eulogized in particular bulls, the Church does not select and indicate for authorization and approval the several facts recorded of the Saints; she hangs a glory round the Saint and the character of his sanctity, which does indeed indirectly illuminate the particular examples of his virtues and gifts, but not to such a degree as to remove them each from the light of their own probability drawn from their intrinsic evidence or the outward testimony which they can legitimately claim. Yet on the other hand we must remember the curious and significant fact that Benedict XIII. made his bulls of canonization extremely short, expressly alleging his fear lest otherwise people should think lightly of what was omitted in the bulls. Thus the seventh test is rather directed to the temper of mind and the degree of respectfulness with which we are bound to proceed to the examination of particular cases, than to our direct judgment on the cases themselves; and as this temper and

respectfulness are moral matters and of primary importance when we come to handle truth, so it is also of primary importance to know the meaning of this or that action or judgment of the Church, and how to graduate the scale of her various approvals according to her own mind and intention.

These remarks are offered in answer to questions and difficulties put before our notice; and it is hoped that the clergy especially will bear with what will seem to them very old and elementary matter, as even that has been found not without its difficulties to inquirers who deserve an answer. Great pains has been taken to moderate the expressions of opinion, to adhere to the theologians principally followed in the schools, and especial jealousy has been used to prevent anything from being overstated, or even dubious examples from being quoted; and now if it does not seem like using very great words for a very little matter, we would conclude by submitting the whole, in substance, form, and language, not only to the Holy Roman Church, as in devout obedience bound, but to the judgment and authority of our own immediate superiors, who speak the voice and represent the will of God to us.

Many years ago the late Mr. Southey mentioned to the writer of this Essay, that when he had safely housed his fine copy of the Bollandists in his library, he set to work to read it through. This feat he accomplished by putting a card at the top of a column, and drawing it rather rapidly down, his quick eye following the

receding card, and if it lighted on any word that was a sign-post to something of interest, he looked into the passage; if not, he sped on; and he said that the result of the whole voluminous collection was only the matter for *All for Love* and the Pilgrimage to Compostella, a very attenuated duodecimo brochure of sparsely printed verse! Every one who knew Mr. Southey's studious habits will easily take this for a conversational exaggeration; yet it serves to illustrate the different value we set on things according to our positions. The object of this Essay is to put a very different price upon the Lives and Legends of the Saints; such a value as one would put, who, with faith in St. Philip's method, had used the narration of Saints' Lives as a weapon of missionary warfare, and had seen, not the breathless interest only or the ready tear of peasant crowds, but the abiding influence for good, the heightened love of God, and the more persevering pursuit of virtue. If it is a problem to some, who have to deal with converts of the lower orders, how to destroy in them the lingering sympathies with dissent, and the sectarian humours only superficially catholized, and to give them the tone and feeling of children of the Church, let missionaries try the recitation of the Lives of Saints, after the fashion of the Oratory, in lieu of sermons, not too frequently, but as the feasts furnish occasions: let them relate the acts of St. Cecilia, St. Agnes, St. Martina, and those early Saints, whose blood made Rome, our holy city, the Jerusalem of Catholics, or let them tell the stories of some

of our own simple Saints, such as St. Winefride, St. Ebba of Coldingham, St. Wilfrid, and St. Edmund of Canterbury, so as to give them sympathies with their own native land as it was beneath the sweet and blessed yoke of faith ; and by the grace of God and the good offices of the Saints, they will see how quickly a Catholic mind will be formed in their people, and how successfully the debasing alloy of old Protestant ideas will be drawn off from them. If we have succeeded in drawing out as strongly as we might have done, how *imitation* is the grand, if not the sole aim, of the Church in canonization, we may add that it does not at all appear how that end can be adequately answered except through Lives of Saints. The recitation of the divine office is confined to clergy and religious, and even if it were not so, the beautifully and admirably compressed lections are more suited to quicken the memory than to inform it. It certainly does seem as though the Church would fail in accomplishing the object of canonization, were it not for that huge body of literature which we call hagiology.

Let us not then hastily reject the Lives of Saints as dangerous reading, or indulge in immoderate expressions of exaggerated apprehension as to their effects. St. Alphonso Liguori, in old age as in youth, after the toils of his episcopal day, was ever found by the light of his midnight lamp conning the Lives of Saints. What must we think of the importance of this reading, when we find St. Catherine of Sienna telling her confessor, that, without any reading at all, the Holy

Ghost had miraculously given her an entire knowledge of the Lives and customs of the Fathers of the Desert, and of the actions of some other Saints, particularly St. Dominic, and that she could think of nothing else? It was thus that the Blessed Spirit tutored one who was so specially His spouse. Let a man read the Lives of the Saints, said St. Philip Neri, who was constantly poring, especially in his latter years, over the Chronicles of the Fathers of the Desert, finding matter for prayer and tears, not for scandal or surprise, in the strange simplicity of those records of spiritual prowess and wisdom; and as has already been said, the unaffected marvellous legend of the Blessed John Colombini, the "poor sheep of Jesus," was a prime favourite of his, put into the hands of many of his penitents. By devout patience, by discreet moderation, by a manly distrust of our own cold-heartedness, above all, by an earnest covetous appetite to be edified and made better men, and by slow reading, not the least important of the conditions, there is no study after that of the Sacred Scriptures, which will yield a man more profit for his soul, than an assiduous perusal of the biographies of Saints. Ah! what better can they do who are exiles in *via*, than trace and kiss the footprints of those who are now welcomed and crowned in *patria*?

F. W. FABER.

*St. Wilfrid's,  
Feast of our B. Lady's Expectation,  
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